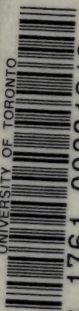


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Artists and Thinkers

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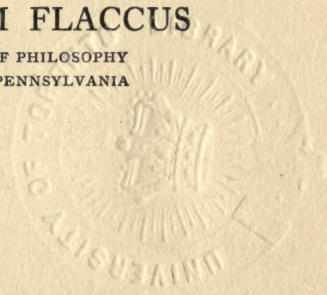
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Artists and Thinkers

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ARTISTS AND THINKERS

I

INTRODUCTORY

EACH of these essays stands by itself as a record of a man's thoughts on art and as a study of the man himself, of his methods of work, his aims and his outlook on life. But they are bound together, even if only in the slenderest of ways: they all have a window open on a problem. A philosopher must have his problem; his comfort demands it—a trade weakness, I admit, but one in which I must confess a share. I have taken my material from the borderline of art and philosophy. I have chosen three artists—Rodin, Wagner, and Maeterlinck—who have achieved greatness in such widely different arts as sculpture, music, and the drama; and three thinkers—Tolstoy, Hegel, and Nietzsche—who are quite unlike and fairly representative. All these men have had much to say on art; they have discussed special points and formulated general theories. Many of these theories are fanciful, unsound, clumsy; these

I have given as well as others which show remarkable insight. Incidentally I may have touched on the truth of a theory or weighed it historically, but the main interest has been elsewhere: in the problem of the interplay of art and philosophy; in tracing the Thinker in the Artist and the Artist in the Thinker.

The problem might be put brutally in its most general form: Is the Artist at heart a Thinker, and the Thinker an Artist? But little would be gained by such a headlong impatience of results. In a mechanical puzzle the solution is the thing. Bits of steel must be twisted about in a certain way or helter skelter balls of mercury must be driven to cover; the sooner it is done, the better. With scientific problems it is much the same. But in philosophy we are often interested in the question rather than the answer; in the whereabouts, the variants, the ins and outs rather than the solution. Not every one would admit as much. There are some who dig a problem in with a spade; they much prefer to have it stay put. To me it seems more important to get the life-beat of a problem in all its unruliness. William James does it successfully because of his open mind and his taste for the individual: he indulges a problem, gives it free play, enjoys its waywardness and uncovers its richness; his work is a protest against the philosopher's idol worship of the general as such. What then should we gain by asking the general question: Is the Artist a Thinker and the Thinker an

Artist? We might answer Yes or No; the result would still be the same: a washed-out answer to a washed-out problem. I do not, of course, mean to defend the ingenious way of keeping problems alive by linking them with others and breaking them into a thousand puzzles, offering a new one as soon as the old one has become lifeless. But I do wish to suggest the liveness, the colorfulness and richness of the problem of tracing with some detail the thought strain in certain artists and the artistic groundwork of certain philosophies. To say that Nietzsche, for instance, is an artist philosopher amounts to little, but it might be worth while to try to give the artistic quality of his thought, to get its stamp, to disentangle some of the motifs in which it is so rich. It might be worth while to show parallelisms between Rodin's technique and his reflections on art; to give the world-view of a Maeterlinck, a Tolstoy or a Wagner as it reflects their imagination and defines their outlook on the world of art; to explain Hegel's philosophy as world-romance of the boldest. I realize quite well that to attempt something of the sort is to set out on the road to the individual, and means a complicated rather than simplified task. It would have been much easier to have given the ordinary schematized interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy—a few high lights and a bit of outline—but why make so little of the richness of a problem? why lose so much by your haste to turn it inside out and tuck it away?

I do not, however, wish to intimate that I have made the problem yield more than a very small part of its wealth; nor do I propose to say of every structural looseness or of every instance of lack of skill that the method demanded it. The choice of the method has been intentional; I believe in its promise and its possibilities; but it would require a much more skilful handling than I can command to give more than a hint or two of these possibilities.

At first sight philosophy and art seem to have little in common. The artist must have color: every daubed sketch or bit of clay in his cluttered-up studio is a call to the eye and the hand; the philosopher must have his grey-in-grey. One likes to imagine the meeting between Socrates the philosopher and Parrhasius the painter at the latter's workshop, and is disappointed in Xenophon's meagre sketch. Socrates with that quick, ferreting mind of his must have found the artist shallow, and Parrhasius may well have thought him uninspired. But, after all, the antagonism may not be so sharp as it seems. There is many an artist with a devil-may-care stroke to his brush or pen and a sincere contempt for the tribe of thinkers, who is in his heart of hearts, quite unknown to himself, a philosopher, and a poor one at that, with a vague use of such terms as ideal, imitation, character, milieu, and what not. And the philosopher at his best and at his worst is often a poet. I grant you there is little poetry in Locke;

not five drops of poetic essence could be distilled from his entire philosophy. But over against him may be set men like Plato, in whom the wealth and color of Athenian life are preserved as they are in no contemporary artist; Plotinus; Spinoza; and Hegel, in whom the sense of the dramatic and the grasp of divine adventure are unusually strong.

Go a step farther and get beyond the artist's pose and the philosopher's clannishness, and you will find them both creatively self-expressive. There the common bond seems to lie. While there are artists who are merely transmissive, sensuously and emotionally, and in whose art there is not the slightest tinge of intellectual expression; there are others—a majority, I should say—who react intellectually as well as emotionally and whose work is shot through with thought. There is more than swing and clatter in Kipling, more than cobblestone verse in the later Browning; Rodin thinks with his chisel, and Klinger with his brush. If Rodin had never jotted down his thoughts or allowed himself to be interviewed, we should still feel the intellectual force of his work; if Wagner had never written his essays or letters we should feel the philosophy of Schopenhauer throbbing in the very music of *Tristan und Isolde*. With philosophy it is very much the same. If there is such a thing as a pure thinking machine it is the scientist, not the philosopher. Philosophy might seem to have freed itself once for all from its early

closeness to poetry when it exchanged the majestic verse of a Lucretius or an Empedocles for a crabbed terminology and a jargon not unlike cracked varnish, but the artistic foundation is still there. The expression of self has simply become less naïve. This may be seen by taking nature and natural phenomena as they appear in the philosophy of Empedocles, Marcus Aurelius, and Hegel.

In Empedocles there is a very direct interest in nature; the sea and the stars flash in his verse, and the panorama of life is given with much of its color. He seeks to interpret, to grasp general laws, but his thought has not worked itself loose from imagery. With Marcus Aurelius the interest in nature is much less direct. His enthusiasm for the universe, *the City of Zeus*, his delicate interpretations of natural processes as so much material for duty, his demand for loyal submission, are so many touches to the problem of realizing oneself, around which his thought moves. If nature is more than an incident in his philosophy it is only because he sees its importance and understands its place in the development of common man and Thinker alike. In Hegel the interest in nature is still less direct: the whole system of nature becomes a phase of cosmic self-realization. Enthusiasm, imagery, and in fact anything that might suggest the Artist, has been pressed beneath the surface, but what a subterranean romanticism there is in this Thinker! With what an

artist's imagination he has seized upon the dramatic possibilities of the human consciousness!

If, then, philosophy and art express more and more indirectly and reflectively certain heart-felt needs and certain personal ways of reacting, what will be the result? The mere asking such a question complicates it immensely. The philosopher must take himself seriously; he means to give the record of reality, and not the "human document" of his temperamental reaction to the universe. He must have his objectivity at all costs, even if he has to attribute to the universe, as Bergson does, his own *élan* and his own plasticity. He regards himself as the interpreter of world-meanings, and not as a child on a frolic. Back of the playfulness of a Nietzsche is a grim constructive earnestness. There is no philosopher who from an observer's point of view is more subjective; and yet, while Nietzsche is fully aware of the influence of his temperament on his thought and is constantly indulging in self-analysis, he does not seem to feel that such temperamental influences affect the *truth* of his philosophy. But an artistically rich philosophy is not on that account true. Still what if a pragmatist blocks a statement like this by interpreting truth as "the sentiment of rationality" and that in turn as so many ethical and æsthetic demands? There is one way out of this tangle: the Thinker may develop as fine a sense of loyalty to facts as such as the scientist's, and still have an

interpretative Artist's imagination and originality. It is not an easy thing to do, but it is not more difficult than the artist's task of combining idealization and imitation. The path from emotional resonance to such more and more indirect self-expression means a richer and a *truer* philosophy.

But what of art and the resulting complications in its field? The thought-strain is beyond a doubt strongly present in much of modern art: there is an intellectual undercurrent in our architecture and our music, and a great deal of intellectual symbolism in our sculpture and painting. But it appears most plainly in the novel and the drama. Rolland's *Jean Christophe*, the novels of Wells and Galsworthy, those of Hardy or Anatole France, flash with intellectual cross-lights of all colors. And what shall be said of the problem play, from Ibsen to Brieux, Shaw, Zangwill, Hauptmann and Bernstein? There is everything there: social theories; social criticism; intellectual fads and fancies; bits of biology and metaphysics; a criss-cross analysis of character. One feels constantly a tugging at the universe and its problems. The question of the artistic value of such developments is not one lightly to be settled. A poem like *Rabbi ben Ezra* gains immensely through its intellectual vigor; so does a play like *Ghosts*, but artistic disintegration can be seen in *Damaged Goods*, *The Link*, and *The Doctor's Dilemma*, and the collapse of a thought-riddled art can be imagined. On

the other hand an intellectual freshening would do our love poets and court poets and war poets no harm. The true value of thought for art seems to me to depend on its indirectness and emotional suggestiveness. This is the rôle it plays in Rodin and in Maeterlinck. They make you *feel* the thrust of the universe. Back of the artist's earnestness there must be a certain freedom or playfulness, just as there must be a certain earnestness back of the playfulness of the philosopher. Downrightness and eagerness to solve problems have spoiled many a play and novel.

Such are a few of the relations between Thinker and Artist. To follow the problem further lies aside from my purpose, which is rather to consider a few individual artists and thinkers, to get some understanding of their working beliefs, and to trace the intellectual and artistic motifs which are an important, even if at times hidden, part of their art and their philosophy.

II

RODIN

Lines and colors are for us only signs of hidden realities. Our eyes plunge beyond the surfaces to the spirit.—RODIN.

It is perhaps too early for a final estimate of Rodin's work. Time has done much in the way of giving the necessary perspective, but with so startling, so revolutionary an artist it must do much more. Certain prejudices have been cleared away; and to-day at the age of seventy-four Rodin has taken his place at the head of French sculptors as a man of ripe achievement. This recognition he owes largely to himself. He remained unshaken by the ridicule of the press, and was utterly indifferent to the adverse comments of the critics. He took his time; worked in his own way; refused to modify his designs; kept to his ideals and his technique; and routed the scoffers and faultfinders by sheer force of artistic purpose. It is easy to be too severe with these critics. After all there is some excuse for their hostility; they had a right to distrust a sculptor who offered as his début *The Man with the Broken Nose*, and who, when commissioned to design a statue of

Balzac, submitted as his sketch jagged, grotesquely sensual features and a huge mass of body wrapped in a formless dressing gown. It was but human to attack a man whose attitude of cheerful independence seemed insulting and whose work could not be made to square with their pet theories. They have had their say, and time has unsaid it. We credit ourselves with greater insight, but it would, I think, be rash of us to deny that we are too near to judge completely and surely, and that much remains for Time, the sifter and shifter of values.

But this much may be said even now of Rodin's sculpture, that it shows a technique which is forceful and resourceful as well as radical, dramatic quality, nervous strength; and that it is intense, imaginative, and intellectually stimulating. Such things are rare in modern sculpture, which at its best is too often simply smooth, graceful or piquant, and at its worst theatrical and lifeless. It gives the impression of being a thing without resource or vitality. Modern music and poetry are vibrant with the spirit of the times; why should sculpture alone of all the arts fail to give something of the passionateness and richness of modern life? Rodin has proved once for all that the fault lies not with sculpture itself, that it, too, can be made responsive and vital; he has broken new ground and shown sculpture to be still very much alive.

His art is not his only answer to the critics. He

has defended his ideals and his technique, has done it brilliantly and incidentally, as only a Frenchman can; he has jotted down his thoughts on art in notebooks; and allowed himself to be interviewed freely. There is hardly a critical study of Rodin in which abundant use has not been made of this material. Perhaps the completest and most suggestive collections published are those of Gsell and Judith Cladel. Some allowance must, of course be made for partisanship, but enough remains. All these sayings of Rodin's give the same impression: of a critic who is unaffected, earnest, and appreciative of fine points; of an artist who takes his art very seriously, reflects on its trend and its sources of inspiration, and refuses to be classed as merely a maker. They are the credo of a reflective artist; they are not afterthoughts; and they are anything but academic. In them may be found the *verve*, the imaginative boldness, and the intellectual quality so characteristic of Rodin's sculpture. When there is such a parallelism it is worth while to trace it by getting independently the marking qualities of the man's work and then passing on to the sayings, which are the self-expression of the Artist and the Thinker in one.

As a worker in marble and bronze, Rodin is not a believer in smooth, highly polished surfaces, and in the large, monotonous planes of groups in repose. Occasionally he aims very successfully at smoothness

and grace. The softness and delicacy of his *Spring-time* can hardly be matched. But the truer Rodin cuts into surfaces boldly; roughens and hollows out. The effect is strikingly varied and individual. It may be studied in *The Burghers of Calais*, the busts of *Dalou* and *Puvis de Chavannes*, and the face of *Balzac*. A comparison of the surface of the bust of *Falguière* with that of *The Man with the Broken Nose* shows a slow maturing of this principle of technique, in which Rodin saw greater and greater possibilities. In his groups he shows a preference for bodies in motion and for sharp-angled positions such as are given by bent, stooping or writhing bodies. Technically this method of modelling and grouping means a sharp contrast between bulging and hollowed out surfaces, and a strong play of light and shade; there is the illusion of depth, of the thrust of mass, of variety in the breaking up of linear expanse. This furrowing and tilting of planes is not Rodin's only reason for the choice of other than reposeful and well-balanced groups. He aims to give to his art the free naturalness of life. *John the Baptist* is sculptured not standing, but walking; thus he, the great fore-runner, is caught in his stride. Nothing could be simpler, less of the nature of posturing and arranging, than *The Burghers of Calais*. The critics protested against such violations of well-established academic principles, and asked him to group the burghers differently: his was such an informal way of sending

men on the road to death, with nothing in the way of pose or set melodramatic touch. And *John the Baptist*? One might almost suspect them of a naïve fear lest he be off and out of the door before they knew it.

Beauty, in the accepted sense of formal beauty, is not the highest law of Rodin's art. There again he ran afoul of the critics, to whom his continued and bold use of the ugly seemed perverse. He would not fit their pseudo-classical ideal of banishing from sculpture every touch and influence of the ugly. But even this side of their extreme position, Rodin's extensive use of the ugly is startling. There are in formative art few instances of greater daring in its use than *La Vieille Heaulmière*, that distressingly frank picture of the physical decay of old age in all its hideousness. In *The Weeper* a face not unattractive in its lines is deliberately caught at its worst, in the grimace of weeping. What has been condemned as absurd in sculpture—a mouth wide open—Rodin has attempted: in the bust *The Tempest* there are the head and shoulders of a female figure springing from the solid block with a fine suggestion of frenzied movement; a suggestion carried over to the face with its tense expression, its wild eyes, and wide-open mouth.

A further characteristic of Rodin's work is its dramatic quality. This must not be held to imply theatricalism, which marks an art at once showy and

weak; and which expresses itself in unnatural poses, constrained gestures, and affected conceits. On the whole there is no theatricalism in Rodin's work, although a few of his groups are marred by a not altogether happy *raffinement*: *The Angel's Kiss* and *Triton and Siren* are instances. His figures are elemental, passionate, dramatic, but supremely natural in every gesture and in the tension and muscular play of their bodies. They seem to hold us by sheer weight of ecstasy or passion. Every muscle shares in the dramatic voicing of movement; inner and outer, everything is at one; one life animates all the parts of a Rodin group. The utmost compactness is insisted on, and much of the dramatic quality of Rodin's sculpture is due to this, but the compactness is never purely external or unnatural, as it is in the Laocoön group. Rodin often blocks his figures or works them out of a solid background of rock for the sake of binding violent gestures or figures to a unity. Often he gains the same end by flexing an elbow or rounding a gesture or by economic grouping; no straggling arm is allowed; the group is bent back into itself, and yet there is nothing suggestive of the strained or unnatural; simply because an inner life is there, gathering up everything, making everything one. The mood or idea is worked out in the several figures of the group and in their relations; no single figure dominates the group. In looking at *Springtime*, an exquisitely modelled

piece, the eye does not catch separately the free and strong posture of the one figure and the passionate yieldingness of the other.

It is to this inwardness as well as to compactness and a strong naturalness that the dramatic quality of Rodin's art is due. It gives beauty and expressiveness to his bust *Thought* and his statue *The Thinker*. The face of the bust is not meant to be beautiful; its lines are too irregular; and yet never has sculptor suggested more forcibly the pensive calm and intense self-absorption of a soul lost in thought. In *The Thinker* a contrasted mood is caught. Rodin represents his *Thinker* seated on a rock, bent forward, one arm clasping a knee, the other bent at the elbow and again at the wrist; the back of the hand shoved under and supporting a massive chin. The muscles are tense and bulky; the neck, short; head and body, those of a heavy-set athlete. No statue could be more compact in its lines; nor could compactness be more expressive of mood; here is thought at its hardest, puzzled, bewildered, groping obstinately; with the body, muscles, tendons and all, heaved into the struggle.

In Rodin's *Hell Gate*, which, still unfinished, is to be a chiselled Dante's *Inferno*, there is a group of two souls in hellfire. Their bodies, supported by knees and arms and crossing at the thighs, form a double arc—a position extreme, but tragic and simple with the simplicity of great art. These arched

bodies suggest the curling and shrivelling of leaves in the fire and a more merciless heat than could have been suggested by any writhing or twisting.

One further illustration—the *Ugolino*. The story of Ugolino, crazed by hunger and devouring his sons, has been put by Dante in verse unmatched for sheer horror and sublimity. In sculpture Carpeaux has given a rather theatrical group. Rodin's is simple and tragic. Ugolino crouches, on hands and knees, with his sons caught under him. Nothing could be more wolfish than the position of this hunger-racked body; but Rodin passes from the horrible to the tragic in Ugolino's face. The head is not bent down; it is in line with shoulders and back; the eyes stare wildly and vacantly, and there is something about the cast of the mouth and the smooth lines of the face more terrible than the utmost physical agony. It is the wreckage of hunger and grief—something of beast and something of a god demented.

A further mark of Rodin's art is its combination of realism and symbolism. His busts run remarkably true, but it is in giving the muscular expressiveness of the body that he excels. One need only compare his *Adam* with that of Michael Angelo to see what an advantage the fearless sculptor has over the painter in this respect. Very instructive also are his numerous and accurate studies of the hand. So true anatomically was one of his earlier figures that he was accused of having taken a cast from the living

model. Rejecting the one-angle theory of sculptured figures, Rodin insists on their being modelled with equal strength and care on all sides; this leads him to a remarkably realistic and expressive treatment of shoulders and back, as in the marble statuette *The Bather*, or still better in the *Eve*. It would, however, be a mistake to say that Rodin aims at extreme naturalism as a *tour de force* or at all costs; it is after all, a mood, a passion, an elemental conflict he wishes to catch; and he purposely exaggerates the size of a hand or foot, overdoes a muscle or hints at two successive moments in one and the same posture, in order to heighten the significance or give the symbolical content of his figures. In this way he avoids such dangers of decadent sculpture as the muscular theatricalism of the Laocoön group and the muscular overdevelopment and immobility of the Farnese Hercules; besides, he avoids the opposite defect, that of the insipid. Rodin's art is nothing if not imaginatively and intellectually stimulating. It is an Eve ashamed, guilt-stricken, that he gives us. In *Satyr and Nymph* there is something of the force and breathless lust of nature at her earliest. In the *Burghers of Calais* there is a subtle grading of heroism and suffering, worked out in figures that combine an almost grotesque naturalism—think of the figure of the monk—with an astounding wealth and intensity of feeling and thought.

So much for some of the significant features of Rodin's art. It is in direct relation to them that his reflections on art must be taken. Of the latter the rich and charmingly simple conversations with Gsell, published under the title *L'Art* in 1911, offer good samples. There Rodin discusses such topics as realism in art, symbolism, design and color, movement in sculpture, thought in art, and modelling. Some four or five of these are of unusual interest. They reveal the inner springs of Rodin's art and genius.

Discussing modelling, Rodin by way of an object lesson takes up a small lamp and lets its light glide over a marble copy of the *Venus dei Medici*, and asks Gsell to notice the many grooves, unevennesses, minute juttings and depressions. What seemed smooth and simple turns out to be complex, and gives the impression of an infinitely rich, warm, and faithful art in sharp contrast to the lifelessness and meagreness of academic sculpture. The Greek ideal is one of blended richness; and it is only because the Greek artist was a patient student of nature and a master in the science of modelling, that he could give warmth and finality to his work. Rodin puts it this way:

"Do you know how this impression of lifelikeness the Venus has just given us is produced? By the science of modelling. These words may seem trite to you, but you will soon see their importance. The

science of modelling was shown me by a certain Constant, who worked in the decorator's shop where I began as a sculptor. One day he saw me shaping in clay the foliage of a capital. 'Rodin,' he said, 'you handle yourself poorly. All these leaves of yours appear flat. That is why they don't seem real. Make some with their points shaped toward you, so as to give any one who looks at them the impression of depth.'

"I followed his advice and was surprised at the result. 'Remember well what I have told you,' continued Constant, 'henceforth in your sculpture never see forms spread out, flat, but always deep . . . Never consider a surface other than the end of a solid, as a point more or less large aimed at you. That is how you will acquire the science of modelling.'

"This principle proved itself wonderfully fruitful to me. I made use of it in shaping my figures. Instead of regarding the different parts of the body as so many planes I represented them as so many juttings of masses beyond. I forced myself to let feel in every bulging of the torso or the limbs the cropping out of a muscle or bone that continued as depth beneath the skin. That is why the truth of my figures instead of being superficial seems to expand from within outward like life itself.

"Then I discovered that the ancients used exactly the same science of modelling. And it is certainly to this principle of technique that their works owe at once their strength and their quivering suppleness."

Rodin then suggests that *light and shade effects* are possible in sculpture as well as in painting.

"In your opinion, Gsell, is color a quality of painting or of sculpture?"

"Of painting, naturally."

"Well, look at this statue." Saying this, he held the lamp so that its light fell on the torso from above. "Do you see these strong lights on the breasts, these strong shadows in the folds of the flesh, and then the whitenesses, the vaporous and trembling half-lights on the most delicate parts of this divine body; these parts so delicately drawn that they seem to dissolve into thin air? What do you say to them? Isn't it all a wonderful symphony in black and white?"

"I had to admit it."

"Paradox as it may seem, the great sculptors have been great colorists, and the best painters have been excellent engravers."

"They play so skilfully all the resources of relief, they fuse so well the boldness of light and the modesty of shadow that their sculptures have all the relish of the richest etching. Color then—and that is what I wish to come to—is like the flower and bloom of good modelling. These qualities go together, and it is they that give to the masterpieces of sculpture the radiant aspect of living flesh."

Rodin also considers the problem of *movement* in sculpture. He himself makes use of movement in order to bring out sharply the muscular expressiveness of the body; here his suggestive theory of movement in sculpture may be said to begin. It is the sculptor's aim to express feelings and passions; and this he must do largely through the muscles; they in turn can be rendered effectively only on

condition that the figure whose mood is to be given is lifelike. This lifelikeness depends on two things: good modelling and movement; and they are the "blood" and "breath" of sculpture. Defining movement as "the changing of one posture into another," Rodin develops the principle of progressive movement. The sculptor, he argues, combines in one moment of presentation two successive positions, and thus makes the spectator take part in the development of a movement, follow it with the eye, and get the stimulus of active change. *John the Baptist* is shown walking, and yet flatfooted as one standing. In the *Age of Bronze*, one of Rodin's earlier works, the awakening of primitive man is symbolized. There the lower part of the body still has something of the softness and deep unconsciousness of sleep, but as the eye follows the body upward, the first dawn of consciousness shows itself in head, shoulder, and arm. Rodin further suggests that in complex groups a skilful grading of moments or a varying of the tempo will allow the sculptor by his own technique to render movement quite as effectively as the poet. As examples he cites Rude's *La Marseillaise* and his own *Burghers of Calais*.

Rodin's thoughts on modelling, light and shade, and movement are thoughts on technique and are offered as new observations on very old principles of all masterly sculpture. Rodin himself again and again turns to Greek art and professes to find all his

principles there; he refers to the modelling of the *Venus dei Medici* and the rush and sweep of the *Victory of Samothrace*. Still there is hardly anything at all like his principle of progressive movement in Greek sculpture; and Greek modelling seems much less given to uneven, jagged or furrowed surfaces. The truth must lie deeper; in certain thoroughly modern artistic demands and ideals expressed in Rodin's art and shadowed forth imperfectly in his reflection. No one would deny extreme individuality to his work. And no one with the vagaries of our younger painters and poets in mind would deny that the demand for individuality is very strong in our latter-day art. It dominates conception and technique.

✱ In sculpture individuality of technique is so difficult a matter that artists of the stature of Canova and Thorvaldsen failed to achieve it. Rodin seeks to gain it by the breaking up of surfaces, by projections and indentations, by accentuating and deepening; and, in spite of what he says, he is not a disciple of the Greeks in this. Letting the light of a lamp glide over the surface of the *Venus dei Medici* is hardly a fair test, for the headlights of an automobile will make the smoothest asphalt road appear as badly dented as a battered piece of tin. Rather is it the modern demand for a perfectly individualized surface and a modern restive technique that make themselves felt. Again, such a principle as that of progressive movement in sculpture is simply one instance more

of the psychological factor in modern art. The essentially unstable, fluid, transforming character of processes of attention and perception is recognized here as well as in impressionistic painting and in the incessant transmutations of Wagnerian music.

Rodin's emphasis on movement touches still another demand; a demand that goes beyond questions of technique to the fundamental question: "What is sculpture to portray?" *Life as movement*, Rodin answers. Of the artist he says that for him "life is an infinite enjoyment, a constant ecstasy, a distracted intoxication." This breaks at once with the traditional view of sculpture as a self-contained, placid art, creator of gleaming marbles at rest, and asks for a dynamic and restless sculpture to parallel life in its restlessness and energy. In this sense Rodin's art is thoroughly modern. Everywhere, from the most surprising quarters, and in various forms, comes the demand for an interpretation of life as movement. Philosophy and art alike show this drift of the modern consciousness. It is seen in Bergson's *élan vital*; in the Futurist's stress on youth and the Futurist ideal of an art out of breath. It appears, at once more vigorous and saner, in the artistic ideals of Rodin.

★ This demand for an art which is to reflect movement and cosmic struggle carries us into the very heart of Rodin's artistic beliefs. It implies the rejection of beauty, in the sense of the regular, the harmonious,

the pleasing, as the aim of sculpture and the acceptance of expressiveness, character, and symbolical content as the ideal. It extends the range and shifts the emphasis. Rodin often discusses the place of ugliness, of expression, and thought in sculpture. A passage like the following begins with the problem of ugliness—*La Vieille Heaulmière* being under discussion—but widens out into all the others:

“ ‘*Master,*’ I said to my host, ‘*no one admires more than I do this astounding figure, but I hope you will not be angry if I tell you what effect it has on the visitors, especially the women visitors, at the Musée du Luxembourg . . .*’

“ ‘You will oblige me by telling me.’

“ ‘Well, the public in general turns away, exclaiming: “*How ugly that is!*” and I have often seen women cover their eyes in order to spare themselves that sight.’

“ Rodin began to laugh heartily.

“ ‘My work must be eloquent to call forth such lively impressions. Beyond doubt such persons fear basic truths when they are too harsh.

“ ‘But the only thing that matters is the opinion of men of taste. I have been delighted to gather their votes on my *Vieille Heaulmière*. I am like the Roman singer who answered the hisses of the crowd by saying, “I sing for the nobles,” which means, the connoisseurs.

“ ‘The crowd likes to believe that what it judges to be ugly in actual life is not fit matter for art. It would like to forbid our picturing what it finds displeasing or offensive in nature.

“ ‘That is a serious error on its part. What is

commonly called ugliness in nature can in art become very beautiful. In the class of actual objects we call ugly what is misshapen, what is unhealthy, what suggests the idea of disease, weakness, suffering, what violates regularity—that sign and condition of health and strength: a cripple is ugly, a sabre is ugly, misery in rags is ugly. Ugly again are the soul and the actions of an immoral man, of a vicious and criminal man, of an abnormal man dangerous to society; ugly is the soul of the parricide, the traitor, the ambitious man without scruples.

“ ‘ It is fit that beings and objects from which we can expect nothing but ill be marked by an odious epithet.

“ ‘ When, however, a great artist or writer takes hold of one of these uglinesses he at once transfigures it, with a stroke of his magic wand he makes of it a thing of beauty. It is alchemy; it is witchery!

“ ‘ When Velasquez paints Sebastian, the court fool of Philip IV, he gives him so moving a look that we read in it at once the sorrowful secret of this cripple, who in order to earn a living is forced to give up his dignity as a human being, to become a play-thing, a living cap and bells. And the more poignant is the martyrdom of this consciousness lodged in a monstrous body, the more beautiful is the work of the artist.

“ ‘ When François Millet pictures a poor peasant who stops for a breathing spell; leaning on his hoe—a sufferer broken by weariness, cooked by the sun, as brutish as a beast of burden raked with blows—all that is needed is to discover in the expression of this damned one resignation to torture decreed by

fate, and this creature of a nightmare becomes a magnificent symbol of humanity at large.

“ ‘ When Baudelaire describes a foul carcass, slimy and eaten by worms, and when he pictures under this frightful image his adored mistress, nothing could equal in splendor this horrible opposition between beauty one would wish eternal and the fearful disintegration that awaits it.

And yet you will be like this filth, this horrible infection, Star of my eyes, Sun of my nature! O my angel and my passion!

Yes, such you will be, O queen of graces, after the last sacraments, when you shall go under the sod lush with blossoms, to rot among the bones,

Then, O my Beauty, tell the vermin that devour you with kisses that I have guarded the form and the divine essence of my decomposed loves.

“ ‘ It is the same when Shakespeare paints Iago or Richard III, when Racine paints Nero and Narcissus: moral ugliness interpreted by minds so clear and penetrating becomes a marvellous theme of beauty.

“ ‘ In short, the beautiful in art is simply what has character.

“ ‘ Character is the intense truth of any sight or scene of nature whether beautiful or ugly; it might even be called a double truth, for it is the truth within translated by that of without; it is the soul, feeling, idea, as they are expressed by the lines of a face, the gestures and acts of a human being, the tones of the sky or the line of an horizon.

“ ‘ For the great artist everything in nature offers

character, for the incorruptible candor of his observation pushes to the hidden sense of everything. And what is thought of as ugly in nature often presents more character than what is styled beautiful, for in the contractions of a sickly face, in the smirk of a vicious mask, in every deformity and every blight, the inner truth bursts forth more easily than in regular and sound features.

“ ‘And since it is simply the strength of character that makes the beautiful in art, it follows that often a thing is the more beautiful in art the uglier it is in nature. That alone is ugly in art which lacks character, that is to say, has no outer or inner truth. Ugly in art is what is false or artificial, what seeks to be pretty or beautiful instead of being expressive; what is clownish or affected, what smiles without motive, what is handled without reason, what bends or straightens itself without cause: everything that is without soul and without truth, everything that is a parading of beauty or grace, everything that lies.

“ ‘When an artist for the purpose of embellishing nature adds green to the springtime, rose to the dawn, red to young lips, he creates ugliness, because he lies.

“ ‘When he softens the grimace of pain, the flabbiness of old age, the hideousness of the perverse, when he arranges Nature, when he veils her, disguises her, when he softens her in order to please an ignorant public, he creates ugliness because he is afraid of the truth.

“ ‘For an artist worthy of the name everything in nature is beautiful, because his eyes, accepting boldly every outer truth, read therein without pain and as in an open book every inner truth.

“ ‘ He need only look at a human countenance in order to decipher a soul; not a single trait deceives him; hypocrisy is to him as transparent as sincerity; the angle of a forehead, the least knitting of the eyebrows, a passing glance, reveal to him the secrets of a heart.

“ ‘ He examines the spirit folded up in an animal. He sees in the look and the movements of an animal its whole moral life—that rough sketch of feelings and thoughts, a heavy intelligence and the rudiments of tenderness. In the same way he is the confidant of inanimate nature! ”

This passage should be supplemented by one of the several in which Rodin discusses the sense of mystery and the nature of symbolism. In one of the later conversations with Gsell he defines religion as the sense of mystery, as “ the push of our consciousness toward the infinite, the eternal, toward a knowledge and a love without limits.” This sense of mystery every great artist has. He then continues:

“ If religion did not exist I should have to invent it. True artists are in short the most religious of men.

“ It is commonly believed that we artists live only by our senses, and that the world of appearances satisfies us. We are thought to be children who are drunk with brilliant colors and who amuse themselves with shapes as with dolls. We are not well understood. Lines and tints are for us only signs of hidden realities. Our eyes plunge beyond the surfaces to the spirit. When we present contours we enrich them with a spiritual content which they are to envelop,

"The artist worthy of the name must express the whole truth of nature, not only outer truth, but inner truth as well.

"When a good artist models a human body he does not merely give muscles; he gives the life that works in them or, better still, the power that shaped them and gave them grace or vigor or amorous charm or untamed fury.

"Michael Angelo makes the creative force roar in the living flesh; Lusa della Robbia makes it smile divinely!"

Gsell in the course of the conversation suggests that Rodin's own statues show very clearly this torment of the invisible and inexplicable. He sees in many of them the symbolism of a soul with infinite yearnings chained to the flesh. He takes as examples the statue of *Balzac*, *The Thinker*, *The Kiss*, *The Burghers of Calais*. All of them are tensional, he holds, in this sense. Rodin, asked to confirm this interpretation, strokes his beard pensively and remarks: "I shall not say No." That there is a great deal of symbolism in his sculpture he admits in many passages. The talk ends characteristically.

"A moment later he asked me: 'Are you now convinced that art is a kind of religion?'

"'Beyond doubt,' I replied.

"Then he added maliciously: 'One must, however, recall that the first commandment of this religion for those that wish to practise it is to know how to model an arm, a torso or a thigh.'"

It is clear from passages like these that Rodin makes use of the ugly for the sake of its expressiveness. His is not a cult of the ugly, the morbid, the repulsive as such; still he is on occasion extreme in his use of the ugly and repulsive. He insists, however, that what is ugly is sharply individualized and stimulating in the sense of giving the sting, the movement, and the expressive range of life. It is for the sake of such symbolism that smooth lines must be broken; harmonies shattered; and ugliness shown at once in its nakedness and its imaginative appeal. Imagination and thought redeem the ugly in art, but only when they spontaneously grow out of the subject chosen. If anything can redeem *La Vieille Heaulmière* it is the thought, at once depressing and imaginatively stimulating, of the contrast between youth and physical decay, and of the silently working forces that change the one to the other. But the reference to Villon's poem, while it adds to the poignancy of the statue, seems to violate Rodin's principle of inherent symbolism. While his interpretation of Millet and Baudelaire is sound in its emphasis on an ideal significance, his reading of Velasquez' painting of the court fool is fanciful, to say the least; an extraneous forcing of meaning. In spite of occasional lapses Rodin is too much of an artist to burden art with the fantastic and narrow symbolism that is to be found in Ruskin and Tolstoy. He is saved not only by his emphasis on form, color,

and muscular expressiveness, but by his interpretation of life as movement and struggle, and by the free play of his imagination. In discussing his statue *La Centauresse*, Rodin remarks:

“In subjects of this kind the thought reveals itself, I believe, without much trouble. They awaken without any strange help the imagination of the onlooker. And yet, far from encircling it within narrow limits, they incite to a vagabondage of fancy. And this, to me, is the meaning of art. The forms it creates are to give to feeling an opportunity to develop indefinitely.”

Of this vagabondage of fancy there is much in Rodin's work, and to its score must be put many of his grotesque and startling experiments in forms. He is not a novelty seeker; but he likes bold conceptions and a certain amount of loose play. It is the Gothic in him—superabundant energy and playfulness keeping symbolism sane and the imagination at a stretch. ~~Not~~ Not that this destroys his theory that sculpture is to give character, that it is to be significant at all hazards—it merely gives it wider scope by interpreting life as energy, as movement with much variety, more than a hint at purposiveness, and a dash of caprice and playfulness.

Rodin does not stand alone in emphasizing what is ugly and in revealing the thrust of an ideal meaning—call it thought or feeling or the drive of life—in sensuous forms. It is worth while to compare

him in this respect with one of the masters of etching—Felicien Rops. Both men are bold and forceful in technique—the one truthful and resourceful in modelling, the other sure and finished in line. Both are masters in the portrayal of the sensuous charm of woman's beauty, and with both this beauty is of a type at once robust and subtle. *Eve* and *The Bather* are matched by Rops's Flemish women with their full-bodied beauty and strong grace. Neither artist is simply graceful or simply elegant; both in aiming at ideal significance admit the ugly to the fullest extent. Quite as extreme as *La Vieille Heaulmière* is Rops's *Mors Syphilitica*. *The Absinthe Drinker* is mercilessly and repellently true at the utter sacrifice of all formal beauty. Skeleton and cloven foot—two devices considered obsolete—Rops uses again and again, sometimes with a view to the sinister and the tragic, often with a view to the grotesque. Of the former, *Dancing Death* and *Death at the Masked Ball* are good samples; of the latter, *Satan Sowing Weeds* is the best. The background of this sketch is a study in black—torn bands of cloud and a struggling moon; in the lower foreground are the shadows of a great city. Flung across this scene and in the act of taking one huge stride is Satan, a skeleton, focussed from below, with grotesquely lengthened shank-bones, *sabots* on his feet, and a sack-like cloth flung loosely across middle and shoulder, and with a head that is haunting by its sheer unlikeness to anything

but a bat in the winglike extensions and the black-ringed brightness of the eyes. Satan is sowing weeds—tiny cupids that are sent tumbling toward the dark shadows of the city. Almost as grotesque and more repulsive in its ugliness is *Happiness in Crime*.

If Rops rivals Rodin in the use of the ugly, he out-rivals him in the symbolism of his art. The dominant note of this symbolism is one of unrelieved pessimism. *The Mirror of Coquetry* and *Shamelessness* are variants of the same theme: the reflection of a simian shape is thrown across a mirror as a sardonic comment on the vanity and pride of man. Skull and cloven foot are used as symbols of the transitory, useless, and wicked thing called life. *Theft and Prostitution Rule the World* is the title of one of Rops's etchings; in another, *The Love-Market*, an old hag is motioning purchasers to the sale of a young girl. Rops's absolute mastery of sensuous form marks his symbolism all the more strongly. Much of his work is dominated by the figure of woman. Sure of her power, triumphant with the triumph of an unconscious and cruel animalism, she brings unrest, misery, and idle amusement—the Devil's own gifts; but change and death threaten this splendor of the flesh.

It would be a serious mistake to regard all of Rops's work from this point of view, for much of it is simply *diablerie*; some of his best drawings, the Rembrandtesque faces of old women, are nothing more

than studies in light and shade and in line. But of what remains the symbolism is one of moral ideas. Often this moral significance is so pointed and oppressive that it runs danger of lessening the artistic excellence, but in many of the etchings it is at once general and compelling, much to the gain of art. Of such gain *Human Wreckage* and *The Absinthe Drinker* are splendid examples, but even here there is a wide difference between the symbolism of Rops and that of Rodin. Rops's art is *fin de siècle* in its pessimism, its irony, and in a certain *raffinement* of the sensuous. With biting satire and in a spirit of bitter mockery it gives a world broken on the wheel of its own folly and vice. A merciless light beats down on whatever is diseased, perverse, morally rotten in modern life. The symbolism is one of moral values.

Not so with Rodin. There is neither mockery nor satire in his work, but there is a very primitive and very direct joy of life, and a very sharp sense of the dramatic and dynamic; at the heart of his symbolism are such simple ideas as: movement, unrest, passion, lust, work, play, man's early struggle with nature, thought, melancholy, bitterness. He feels all these and their elemental conflicts to the full, but his rugged optimism finds them bracing. He avoids the *bourgeois* symbolism of a Hogarth with its moral picture book series, and the great but too strongly moral symbolism of a Rops. Artistically the symbolism of

✧ *Mors Syphilitica* is inferior to that of *La Vieille Heaulmière*; the idea of the ravages of a particular disease is inferior in range and power to the idea of the silent, inevitable passing from youth to old age. In contrast to a symbolism that crystallizes, Rodin's is fluid. It expresses his view that life is movement and struggle; something as unrestful and intensely dramatic in its quiet changes as in its explosive moments. It is a symbolism of life-forces in their flow and at full pressure.

This fluid, natural symbolism Rodin joins to a strong and accurate technique. He knows the anatomy and geometry of his art, and gets full plastic value out of his marble. In his best work the form is made to respond so thoroughly and readily to a symbolic idea which in turn seems to grow out of it that the impression is one of an art of stronger dramatic quality and of greater imaginative and intellectual range and wealth than was thought possible in sculpture. Rodin as a thinker on art has the insight and the courage to see the value of what made him great as an artist. He demands an unflinching observation, accuracy, individuality, skill, forceful workmanship—all at the service of an artistic purpose that catches the very breath and pulse-beat of life.

III

MAETERLINCK

*Nothing in the whole world is so athirst
for beauty as the soul, nor is there anything
to which beauty clings so readily.*

—MAETERLINCK.

MAETERLINCK'S æsthetic essays might be counted on the fingers of one hand. Two—*The Inner Beauty* and *The Tragical in Daily Life*—are to be found in *The Treasure of the Humble*; one—*The Modern Drama*—in *The Double Garden*; and one—*King Lear*—in *The Measure of the Hours*. To these must be added the fine preface to the collected plays. Then there are, of course, many incidental remarks on art and beauty.

His interest everywhere seems to lie in two problems: he attempts a new interpretation of the tragic, and he sees in beauty the self-expression of a strong and responsive soul. He ignores the social and cultural relations of art, and affords in this respect a sharp contrast to men like Hegel, Wagner, Nietzsche, Ruskin, and Tolstoy; and it is owing to this, I think, that his art and philosophy

alike lack the gritty admixture which is found in much of their work. The artistic works in few men with such purity. There is no problem or question of the day, however matter of fact or grim and urgent—war, suffrage, justice, gambling, automobiling—which he fails to dissolve into a play of colors or a fantastic dance of possibilities, drawing near and receding in the dusk. His essays on gambling and the duel, *The Temple of Chance* and *In Praise of the Sword*, are good samples. One gets wonderfully vivid images, of yellow counters and blue notes and clinking gold, of the tiny ivory ball spinning and hopping “like an angry insect”; and of the flash and glint of the rapier. But one gets more than that: an ever-changing outlook and play of suggestions. The sword becomes a symbol of man’s intelligence, of his high sense of honor, and of his emergence from an early state of brute force and of brutal ways of settling scores; it is likened to “a fairy bridge swung over the abyss of darkness.” Such intellectual and imaginative festooning is thoroughly characteristic of Maeterlinck; it marks both the good and the bad in his art and philosophy. At its worst it suggests the spun-sugar creations of a confectioner’s shop; at its best it gives a wealth of overtones, a veiled aliveness, and a constantly shifting enterprise in a world of shadowy limits.

The best starting-point for any study of Maeterlinck’s personality as an artist and a thinker is a

passage in the preface to his collected plays. It was written in 1908. In it he analyzes the beauty of a work of art as follows: "*First the beauty of language, then the impassioned view and portrayal of what exists about us and in us, that is, nature and our sentiments, and lastly, enveloping the whole work and forming its atmosphere, the idea formed by the poet of the unknown in which the beings and things he calls forth are drifting, and of the mystery which rules and judges them and presides over their destiny.*"

Of surface beauty, made up of the first and the second, there is much in Maeterlinck. He is unobtrusive, direct, and delicate in his appreciation of beautiful things. There is something Flemish in his delight in precious stones and in rich, old stuffs; something of French mediævalism at its best in his backgrounds with their castles and moats, their parks with old trees and sleepy pools, their forests and grottoes and cliffs.

He is a decorative artist of the first rank, and very original in his effects. It matters little what he is giving: a woodcutter's hut; a convent; the gardens of Silanus with their orange-trees, cypresses, and oleanders, and their outlook on "the anemones streaming down the slopes of Bethany" and the dull green of the olive trees; the tent of Prinzivalle and its Renaissance virility and luxury; a beautiful woman*;

* SILANUS: She was clad in a raiment that seemed woven of pearls and dew, in a cloak of Tyrian purple with sapphire ornaments, and

the confusion of sounds as the huge convoy of wagons laden with grain and fruit and wine starts out "by torchlight into the starry night"; or the bells and bonfires of Pisa.* Everywhere there is the same richness, the same sense of color and outline. Maeterlinck's settings and backgrounds are decorative; so is, in every detail almost, his picture of nature. The imagination at work is pictorial rather than plastic. Apart from any question of symbolism, one fails to find in him the massiveness and the stress of Rodin's sculpture; his art lacks body; and while he gives the sense of distance and visual depth, he owes it to color contrasts and color patterns and above all else to his skilful use of light. What Rodin achieves by modelling, Maeterlinck gains by a light that throws colors sharply against each other in place of tempering or blending them; a light that

decked with jewels that rendered a little heavier this eastern pomp. As for her hair, surely, unloosed, it would cover the surface of that porphyry vase with an impenetrable veil of gold.

*VANNA: What is it, Gianello? Ah, I see! They are the bonfires lit to celebrate your work. The walls are covered with them, the ramparts flame, the campanile blazes like a joyous torch! All the towers throw answering splendors back at the stars! The streets are lanes of brightness in the sky . . . I know their outlines; I can follow them as clearly as when by day I trod their stones . . . There is the Piazza with its fiery dome—and the Campo Santo like an island of shadow. Life, which seemed gone forever, comes quickly back, shoots up the spires, rebounds from the stones, overflows the walls and floods the country side . . . Do you not hear the cries, the wild joy that mounts and mounts as if the sea were flooding into Pisa—and the bells sing out as on my marriage morn.

seems to sink into colors and forms to varying depths—all the way from a brilliant opaqueness to utter transparency. There is the suggestion of a technique not unlike that of Max Reinhardt in his revolutionary stage settings and their draperies of black; their bands of orange or purple; their schematic lines and masses. Symbolism apart—and it must be waived as long as Maeterlinck's first and second types of beauty are the only ones under discussion—a setting by Reinhardt or Maeterlinck is more emphatic in its detail than the most slavishly imitative *mise-en-scène* of the old school could be. Their schematic originality sets off parts by making them striking. I do not wish to press too strongly the similarities in the decorative effects of the two men; there are some very sharp differences as well; nor do I mean to deny that there is in Maeterlinck's art a dissolving or fusing principle. But that dissolving principle is set to work only after a vivid, clear, and incisive imagination has caught the world of natural objects with great originality and neatness, or *netteté*. It is not at all comparable to the automatic, sensuous unification or blurring of patches of color on which the pointillist counts. Rather does it come in by way of mood or of a philosophy of life, and as such we must ask it to wait while we turn once more to surface beauty and surface significance.

In *The Blue Bird* there are two very different pictures, one of the Land of Memory, the other of the

Land of the Future. Surely here would be a fine chance for a formless imagination to indulge its liking for the indefinite; here would seem the very place for half-lights and unsteady shadows. But that is not what Maeterlinck gives. There could be no more definite place than this Land of Memory; it is all so delightfully real and matter of fact. One feels sorry about Gaffer Tyl's bad leg, but sorrier still, as he himself does, about the loss of his pipe; one hears Granny Tyl praise the apple tarts she used to bake and sees her lay the table for supper and bring out the cabbage soup: one sees the children—all sizes like "a set of Pan's Pipes"—come out of the house, Riquette still crawling on all fours and Pauline with the same old pimple on her nose; and best of all one sees Tytyl make a little glutton of himself, spilling the soup and getting a very real box on the ear. There is one fantastic idea which sets all this apart, the idea that the dead are asleep except when we think of them. This whole life of theirs, so true a duplicate of ours in all its details, is wholly dependent on our memory, at whose call it rises above or falls below the horizon of consciousness. The idea and the picture, far from clashing, assist each other. The Land of the Future, although a more fantastic conception, has an equally definite geography, and is visualized quite as sharply—the steps; the benches; the workshops of the Blue Children; the great opalescent swinging doors; Father Time

with his scythe; and the galley with white and gold sails.

Maeterlinck is a decorative artist in still another sense than this of strongly individualizing the surfaces of life. He is constantly using nature as a background against which our inner life is flung and in subtle harmony or strong conflict with which it fulfils its destiny. In *Wisdom and Destiny* there is image after image—a bit of mountain scenery; the sea and the lighthouse; the palace and the river; a still lake; the play of light or the stealing on of darkness; forest; cave; bedrock. But the images are sketched roughly and often vaguely; one gets the impression of a sort of *al fresco* decoration meant to set off the spiritual truths of the book. The essays *Chrysanthemums* and *Old-Fashioned Flowers* show both types of decorative effect. There is to be found in them a great deal of fanciful symbolism; they hint at one or the other of the many incidents of that soul-drama in which Maeterlinck shows so keen an interest. But there is plenty of sharply individual color. What could show a more delicate and original painter's imagination or a more finely discriminating sense of the pageantry of nature than his description of the autumn flowers? On them autumn bestows "all the wealth of the twilight and the night, all the riches of the harvest-time."*

* " . . . it gives them all the mud-brownwork of the rain in the woods, all the silvery fashionings of the mist in the plains, of the

What about the second element in Maeterlinck's conception of surface beauty: the impassioned portrayal of what exists in us? As an artist and philosopher of the inner life he has definite limitations and peculiar merits. He gives moods and feelings rather than character; and some of these, such as the fear of death, religious fervor, wonder, the clairvoyance of old age, and the dreamy gestures of an awakening soul, recur again and again in his pages. With one or two exceptions he has failed to give in his plays and essays sharply individualized characters with marked groups of interests and unforgettable spiritual conflicts. The one outstanding exception is *Mary of Magdala*. *Sister Beatrice* and *Monna Vanna* are intensely dramatic and have at times a very strong individual appeal, but there is, at least in *Monna Vanna*, an intermittent blurring of lines which makes a character like Prinzivalle or Monna Vanna unconvincing. If you go back to the early puppet plays the secret will reveal itself. Maeterlinck, who shows a fine sense of form and a graphic and decorative

frost and the snow in the gardens. It permits them, above all, to draw at will upon the inexhaustible treasures of the dead leaves and the expiring forest. It allows them to deck themselves with the golden sequins, the bronze medals, the silver buckles, the copper spangles, the elfin plumes, the powdered amber, the burnt topazes, the neglected pearls, the smoked amethysts, the calcined garnets, all the dead but still dazzling jewellery which the North Wind heaps up in the hollows of the ravines and foot-paths; but it insists that they shall remain faithful to their old masters and wear the livery of the drab and weary months that gave them birth."

touch in his descriptions of the world without, is in his portrayal of the world within neither graphic nor decorative, but *atmospheric*. In plays like *The Blind*, *The Seven Princesses*, *The Intruder*, *The Death of Tintagiles*, and *Pelleas and Melisande* the first impression is one of muffled pathos, but as this dies down it is succeeded by a sense of spiritual unreality. These men and women who face life with the irresolution or bewilderment or wonder of a child somehow seem unreal; and the cause of that unreality is Maeterlinck's *atmospheric* method. They have the blurred unreality of figures in a fog—one gets a sense of faltering lines, of insecure distances, and of a merging of greys and blacks, which produces weird and monotonous imaginative effects. An emotion or a mood—a mere wisp of color—is shaded off and made to spread until it becomes one with all that surrounds it. Something like this is to be found in his essays also. For him the inner life has its soft and gentle beauty, and that beauty he has given delicately in essays like *Silence*, *The Inner Beauty*, *The Deeper Life*, *The Awakening of the Soul*, *Sincerity*. Everywhere there seems to be a strange formlessness as well as a subtle charm. They would be the despair of the sculptor with his tactile imagination and his need of plastic forms, for there is here no outline to follow; there are no sharply individualized surfaces such as distinguish the art of a Rodin. They would be the delight of the atmospheric painter, for here

everything dissolves, everything loses itself in a stream of light and shade. Much might be said of Maeterlinck's development as a Thinker and an Artist. The later plays and essays differ widely from the early plays. The change is one of world-view, of interpreting differently the meaning of life, and as such has a very important bearing on Maeterlinck's third type of beauty, but it also affects his portrayal of the surface beauty of the inner life. The *atmospheric* effects of the puppet plays in some ways contrast sharply with those of the essays. They left the impression of dark, uncertain figures plunged into a fog; but here all things are steeped in light, and they themselves have taken on the nature of light.

Under the influence of an *irradiating* imagination even the twilight recesses of consciousness begin to glow; and thoughts and feelings, however slight, become pencillings of light in a mystic transcription of experience. It is strange how fond the mystic is of light; how he uses it again and again in his analogies. This is true of Plotinus, of Ruysbroeck, to judge by passages translated by Maeterlinck in *On Emerson and Other Essays*; it is true of Maeterlinck himself, for a mystic he has remained in spite of Stoics and evolutionists. When Marcus Aurelius gives the drama of the soul his thought is radiant, but it is not like Maeterlinck's, formless and tenuous. In Hardy again there is nothing at all like an atmos-

pheric treatment of the inner life, for while he interprets man as deeply rooted in nature and is interested in nature as the voice of law, ever changing and ever changeless, and in man as the life of all manner of instincts sucked in from the cosmic soil, he has given us very sharp and accurate pictures of natural scenery—he knows his Dorsetshire thoroughly—and has portrayed character in all its individuality and jaggedness as well as in its blindness.

Nothing can serve better to emphasize Maeterlinck's *atmospheric* method than to contrast it with the plastic and mathematical method of Dante. Clearly visualized as is Maeterlinck's *Land of Memory*, it pales in comparison with Dante's *Hell*. Here everything is worked out with a mathematician's precision, Circle after Circle, down to the minutest details of topography; one sees genius in the rôle of architect and carpenter. Every punishment has its definite symbolical meaning; and every shape, however fantastic or brief in appearance, has its definitely articulated inner life, glimpses of which we get as we listen to Guido da Montefeltro or Ugolino or Paolo da Rimini. Both men are among the finest poets of color and light. In contrast to Maeterlinck, Dante gives sundered, blocked-out effects in his symbolical as well as his decorative use of light. In his *Paradise* he has attempted a City of Light, and he has very ingeniously drawn individual structures and contrasts from so unpromising a building material.

The secret of his method is combination: combination of planets, of lights and fires, of colors. One feels the studied arrangement, hears at times the creaking of this Divine Mill, and comes to see some point in Schopenhauer's remark that the *Paradise* reminded him of nothing so much as the illuminations of Vauxhall. In Maeterlinck there is no piecing together, no structure; nothing but a flood of light and an inundating study of the soul. One feels immersed in a medium which allows neither foothold nor handhold.

Surface beauty is not the last word in Maeterlinck's æsthetics. Nor is it in his art. We have his own word for it: "*. . . and lastly, enveloping the whole work and forming its atmosphere, the idea formed by the poet of the unknown in which the beings and things he calls forth are drifting, and of the mystery which rules and judges them and presides over their destiny.*" This suggests what is most interesting in the Thinker and most characteristic of the Artist; more than that, it suggests the common wellspring of both. We are coming to look more and more closely for the hidden motifs of a philosopher's world-view; and we are realizing more and more that an artist's world-view is an integral part of his art. The artist himself, if he is at all reflective, will regard it as such. Rodin insists that he is shadowing forth the meaning of the universe and not merely toying with forms and colors;

Meredith has his philosophy of the comic spirit, Browning his, of self-realization; Anatole France interprets as well as describes; and Hardy looks upon human life as the narrow end of a funnel widening out into all the problems of evolutionism.

Maeterlinck's interest in a symbolical and spiritual factor in art can best be seen and followed in his theory of the drama. When he goes to the theatre, he tells us, he feels as though he were spending a few hours with his ancestors. "I am shown a deceived husband killing his wife, a woman poisoning her lover, a son avenging his father, a father slaughtering his children, children putting their father to death, murdered kings, ravished virgins, imprisoned citizens—in a word, all the sublimity of tradition, but alas, how superficial and material! Blood, surface-tears, and death!" This might seem to be an arraignment of melodrama; but it goes much beyond that, for what is the tragedy of to-day is often the melodrama of to-morrow. To him the old drama seems an anachronism. It gave the clash of passion with passion intensely, directly, brutally; and the passions whose clash it gave were themselves brutal and elemental. But to us with centuries of control at our backs, and with reflected feelings and an oblique emotional life, these clashes seem crude—except when we relapse, for an hour or two, to the primitive. Maeterlinck, however, does not commit Tolstoy's mistake

in dealing with the Greek drama and Shakespeare. Where Tolstoy belittles, he admires, because he sees, not merely crude passion, but beauty and significance. In *Wisdom and Destiny* he insists on the spiritual significance of *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Ædipus Rex*; and he alludes elsewhere to the decorative beauty and picturesque grandeur of a play like *Romeo and Juliet*. But he claims that we have lost, and cannot recover in any real sense, the stately grandeur of an Æschylus or the picturesqueness of the Renaissance. As for the spiritual significance of the Greek drama, it, too, has been lost. To us the drama of soul and fate presents itself in other ways and plays itself off with other meanings. Why, then, if we cannot recover what is really of value in the old drama, should we be so intent on saving what is valueless? Why should we not attempt a drama which reflects in its incidents, its characters, and subtle suggestions the meanings of *our* life? These seem to Maeterlinck to be three: a lively and persistent interest in the problem of the clash between passion and duty; a complex and penetrative view of consciousness; new cosmic beliefs gradually taking shape under the stress of science and of new spiritual needs.

To him the first appears clearly in the social dramas of Ibsen and in the problem play, which developed largely under their influence. Of course, such a generalization has its weaknesses; the struggle of duty with passion is one of the oldest motifs in tragedy,

but on the whole it is true that there is something new: a challenging criticism which does not stop short of the problematic in morality itself. It is interesting to watch Ibsen at his work of uncovering "irrational survivals" in our moral habits and ideals, of pointing to shabby and worn places in our system of duties. He is a diagnostician ever on the alert for possible flaws and danger. Still his piece-by-piece social criticism seems to us just a bit old-fashioned. We demand a more subtle and *synthetic* challenge; such as we get in *Monna Vanna*, where the last act leaves us in a curiously divided mood between a morality that is no longer felt to be final and a new morality, promising but as yet unformed, except for longings and vague anticipations.

It is clear that Maeterlinck looks beyond the problem play for a new and adequate drama. He turns next to what he regards as the second great interest of our times: the exploitation of consciousness. The psychological soul-drama seems to him to express certain modern demands. We ask for a poetic interpretation and exploration of the utmost reaches of the inner life even to the abnormal or to feelings whose very nature it is to be still and inactive. Maeterlinck's favorite instance of such a soul-drama is Ibsen's *The Master Builder*. He might have added *The Lady from the Sea*, Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell* and *Hannele*, Strindberg's *Dance of Death*, and most of his own plays. He alludes to what he calls the

somnambulistic character of *The Master Builder* and to the secondary dialogue, which runs a ghostly parallel to the ordinary exchange of words, and which gives an echo—"extremely attenuated and variable"—of what passes in the depths of consciousness. "Side by side with the necessary dialogue will you almost always find another dialogue that seems superfluous; but examine it carefully, and it will be borne home to you that this is the only one that the soul can listen to profoundly, for here alone is it the soul that is being addressed." This interest in the subconscious has remained a definite part of Maeterlinck's art and philosophy; it appears strongly in his essays as well as in his plays, and is responsible for books like *Our Eternity* and *The Unknown Guest*.

This readily suggests what Maeterlinck regards as the third striking thing in the intellectual, moral, and artistic world of to-day: new cosmic beliefs and a new, tentative way of defining man's relation to the Universe. He himself marks the transition in sentences like the following. "Hilda and Solness are, I believe, the first characters in drama who feel, for an instant, that they are living in the atmosphere of the soul; and the discovery of this essential life that exists in them, beyond the life of every day, comes fraught with terror. . . . A new, indescribable power dominates this somnambulistic drama. All that is said therein at once hides and reveals the

sources of an unknown life." This unknown is in us and it is in all around us. Of this problem of the unknown the new drama will make full use; it will seek to trace the "intangible and unceasing striving of the soul towards its own beauty and truth," and it will seek to understand and exploit artistically the mystery of the Universe, the new mystery of the Universe. This new drama is still only an ideal, and Maeterlinck would be the first to disclaim for his plays and essays more than a slight approach to this new soul-attitude and world-view. Of this, however, he would feel sure, that in these new interests and developments lie the possibilities of a new art.

This discussion of Maeterlinck's æsthetics of the drama has served its purpose: it has given certain clues as to what he considers the third and essential type of beauty. It is from here that any further analysis of Maeterlinck as an Artist and Thinker must start.

Passing from Maeterlinck the decorative artist and poet of surface beauty to Maeterlinck the artistic and philosophical interpreter of meanings, the first striking thing is a *sense of the fragmentary*. This appears in a double sense, and seems to violate the fundamental principles of art and philosophy. The dramatist, especially, aims to give well-rounded characters and a circumscribed group of incidents; and within this circle he sets interest against interest,

purpose against purpose, complication against complication. And even if he is quite modern and offers "a slice of life," cutting into character and incident at random, he still does not give the impression of the fragmentary nature of either. He may look down the road to heredity or trace the play of instinct. I may stand on a hill and watch a road narrow down to a ribbon and lose itself in the distance; if I do, I get the impression of endlessness or of a breaking off; and that is all I get from this type of drama; and not the sense of the fragmentary. The philosopher ordinarily loves completeness quite as much as the artist, and has his own world-circle in which everything is related and set in order. If he comes upon anything patchy or incomplete, anything in the way of odds and ends of experience, he puts it into his little playhouse of reason, and what were fragments become very methodical toys. But Maeterlinck—I know of no one who leaves so vivid an impression of the fragmentariness of life, inner and outer. What we say and what we do is but a scrap of what we think and feel; and our thoughts and feelings give incompletely or not at all what passes in the depth of our souls. In *The Princess Maleine* and *The Blind*—one might really include all his earlier plays—there is a sort of echoing repetition of exclamations, words, phrases. It is easy to burlesque it; it often comes perilously near to turning the tragic into the ludicrous. But for all the evident lack of skill there

is a reason for this echoing method. Maeterlinck wishes to suggest individuals who are struggling with their own great inner Unknown as well as with life; who somehow feel the meaninglessness or inadequacy of words; who grope about in a confused and stumbling way for their own selves; the monotony is meant to mark their bewilderment. One feels throughout it all that not even omniscience would give to these souls rest and self-possession. For this larger meaning which they seek so obstinately and blindly—what is it? Not even omniscience could tell.

Here lies the difference between a mystic like Maeterlinck and a philosopher like Hegel. Both use extensively the contrast between the lesser and the larger meaning; both are subtle interpreters of consciousness. Hegel insists that all things are interlaced, and that you cannot define anything except in terms of all its relations, but he gives you to understand that reality is an orderly and complete developing-system, and with him the stress is everywhere on completion rather than on fragmentariness. Omniscience would not fail here. But with Maeterlinck all the emphasis is on the fragmentary character of experience and, one might add, on the fragmentary character of reality. Even his "faith in the idea of the universe"—his belief that some day the universe will no longer be fitfully illumined by science, but will stand revealed in its beauty and reasonableness, is

interpreted as an instinct. The emphasis in this outer mystery as well seems to be on the fragmentary.

It would be a useless bit of generalizing to refer to this *sense of the fragmentary* and fail to indicate how differently it shows itself in the earlier and the later interpretations Maeterlinck gives of the universe and of consciousness. While this change was one of slow development, and not the outcome of a crisis in the Artist and the Thinker, it is none the less momentous. One cannot afford to overlook it.

Here is Maeterlinck's earlier world-view. Speaking of his dramas from *The Intruder* to *The Death of Tintagiles*, he remarks: "One is aware here of vast, invisible powers of destiny whose purposes no one knows, but whom the spirit of the drama supposes to be malevolent, watchful of all our actions; the enemies of laughter, of life, of peace, of happiness. Here innocently hostile destinies are woven and unravelled, to the ruin of all—under the saddened eyes of the wisest, who foresee the future, but cannot change in the least the cruel, inflexible game that Love and Death play among mortals." He then hints at a capricious Fatality; at a deep "night of nature" whence dart Death and other cruel forces to destroy the life and happiness of man. Of these forces Death seems the most destructive and capricious; it is blind, it pounces at random; too quick a movement will draw its leap.

There is something naïve about this use of the

terrible and the terrifying; this notion that nature is a circle of darkness about human life, with nightly alarms and forays by destiny—no one knowing at what point, in what strength, to what end. But it is really nothing but a *dramatization of fear*: an ill defined fear that knows not which way to turn. For, after all, this world of Maeterlinck's is theirs that live in it; it reflects their consciousness. And so the interpretation of the inner life links itself with the outer. These men and women of his early plays, whom Maeterlinck calls "slight, fragile beings, weeping, passively pensive," seem to be rousing themselves from a painful dream. With a confused and heavy sound their tears drop into the abyss of destiny. But the confusion and heaviness is in their souls; there is in them no strengthening and sharpening of consciousness by purpose; no lightening by confidence; no clearing by self-criticism. They are exquisitely responsive, but to suggestions of one kind only; they fear, for themselves or others; a vague, nameless dread in forms acute or subtle invades their whole emotional life. They owe their *flickering* existence quite as much to their own inner weakness as to the gusts of Fate.

This earlier world-view of Maeterlinck's might be symbolized in some such way as this. Imagine a funnel-shaped abyss in the middle of a wind-swept plateau. The depth seems limitless, and out of it there float aimlessly wraithlike forms—bits of feel-

ing, of purpose, thoughts, fragments of consciousness, which are shaken out and impelled upward by one knows not what longing or premonition. As they reach the rim and seem about to shape themselves to some sort of orderly life, a rush of air, sweeping across the plateau, bears down on them and scatters and tosses them to nothingness. The gust comes no one knows whence, and is the mere fragmentary presence of a power whose extent and whose destructiveness no one can measure. This picture visualizes, I think, the intensive and extensive fragmentariness which marks so sharply Maeterlinck's interpretation of consciousness and of the universe.

The later world-view is quite different, but shows the *sense of the fragmentary* just as strongly. The outer mystery, the universe, has been reinterpreted; it is no longer thought of as an abode of terror or a malevolent, clumsy force bursting in on human happiness. This change in Maeterlinck is generally attributed to the influence of evolutionism and Stoicism; and they have in fact had much to do with it. But a man does not change a world-attitude as he would a suit of clothes—it is not so external a thing; and so I should be inclined to assign the larger share in this change, striking as it is, to something much more intimate and subtle—the gradual ripening and mellowing and *settling* of Maeterlinck's artistic personality. It is well to remember that evolutionism, as a philosophy and a faith, lends itself readily to

either the gospel of hope or the gospel of despair. Not enough has been made of such personal dramatizations of scientific and philosophical theories. The old dramatization of evolution is familiar: it is the "claw and talon" theory. We were asked to observe the cruelty and wastefulness of Nature, to watch her snuffing out lives or scattering pain throughout her realm. So strongly was the thing dramatized that one could almost hear the panting and the groans of the creatures caught in the deadly "struggle for existence" and the thud of those that were to be "eliminated." That old melodrama, reeking with blood and noisy with strife, has now gone out of fashion. Instead of it there is often a very suave, very confident evolutionism, which looks upon "elimination" as one would on discarding in a game of cards, and on nature as a system of "stepping stones," nicely blocked out and leading to some sort of a palace of the future—all light and no lines. The scientist smiles at both pictures; he is not given to personal reactions. What Maeterlinck the riper artist offers, is a *dramatization of hope*, as contrasted with his earlier dramatization of fear; and in it two ideas are constantly staged: that of a more and more rational universe and that of a progressive mastery of nature. Either will break the point of evil. But when I ask myself, What is the exact nature of this new universe of Maeterlinck's? I find in *Wisdom and Destiny*, *The*

Leaf of Olive and other essays certain hints: such as its probable non-moral character; its creative fashioning of new situations and new laws; its orderliness; its surprises; and its complexity. But when I try to piece these hints together, with simile after simile, image after image, crowding in on me, I find it impossible to shape them to a well-outlined, well-built City of Light; just as I found it impossible, in Maeterlinck's earlier plays, to trace the complete lineaments of a City of Darkness. Everywhere the stress is not on finality, but on the incomplete, the *fragmentary*. Here is Maeterlinck's way of dramatizing this "background of light":

"It seems as though we heard those movements: the sound of superhuman footsteps, an enormous door opening, a breath caressing us, or light coming; we do not know; but expectation at this pitch is an ardent and marvellous state of life, the fairest period of happiness, its youth, its childhood."

This is a very effective companion picture to that of the sudden forays of a stealthily moving, malevolent Fate.

This later conception of the universe suggests in some ways a transformation scene in a spectacle, in which curtain after curtain is lifted, each filmier and more transparent, until, with the last bit of gauze withdrawn, the scene stands out sharply in all its details. But—and this is an all-important difference—one never feels in Maeterlinck that the last bit of

gauze has been withdrawn or that there is a last bit of gauze or a sharp and final scene; one is conscious of an endless succession of luminous veils.

But what of Maeterlinck's reinterpretation of consciousness, the inner mystery? And how does his *sense of the fragmentary* show itself in that? The later work reveals an increasing interest in consciousness and a growing disposition—for which Stoicism must receive part credit—of relating intimately character and destiny, universe and attitude. Certain earlier notions persist: that of the abysmal nature of consciousness, that of the subconscious, that of instinct and premonition as things deeper than reason or purpose, that of slight, expressive gestures. But consciousness, instead of faltering and flickering in the darkness, radiates a strong, even light of confidence and happiness. Happiness is now the key-note. Maeterlinck is fond of the image of "inner treasure" crystallizing in the subterranean regions of the soul and brought to light now and then in a moment of exceptional strength, in an experience of exceptional nobility or beauty. This is a good companion picture to that of bits of consciousness floating upward in an abyss. Here as well as there, one gets the impression of *intensive fragmentariness*, for how much soul there is no one knows, and how much treasure there is no one knows; what we are aware of are *bits* of treasure flung up from depths not to be measured.

Further pursuit of this tenuous Artist and somewhat shadowy Thinker would yield, among much that was new, many additional instances of his *sense of decorative beauty*, of his *atmospheric method*, of his *irradiating imagination* and of his *sense of the fragmentary*.

NOTE: In quoting from Maeterlinck I have made use of the translations of Sutro, Teixeira de Mattos, and Coleman, and wish to acknowledge such use.

IV

WAGNER

So your fugue broadens and thickens
Greatens and deepens and lengthens,
Till we exclaim—"But where's music,
the dickens?"

—BROWNING.

Once more he step into the street
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight
cane:

And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured ear)—

—BROWNING.

It is for the expert in music to give a study of Wagner the composer, the artist; for he alone is competent to sketch the history of music and to discuss Wagner's innovations in harmonics, characterization, and structure; to him alone can we look for a comparative study of scores and a subtle appreciation of musical resources. The time has come for such a study; Wagnerian music has emerged from periods of rabid abuse and blind idolatry, and readily submits to, in fact calls for, a critical estimate.

Meanwhile there is for one who is not a musical expert a problem of great interest: the study of Wagner the essayist and reflective artist. Beyond a doubt Wagner takes himself very seriously as a Thinker, and seeks to develop and justify his artistic ideals in a series of essays; some of which are brief, like those on Beethoven, on acting and on the theatre, on opera, on composing, on the artist and the public, others long and constructive, like *The Work of Art of the Future*, *Opera and Drama*, *Art and Religion* and *Art and Revolution*. None of them is easy or attractive reading; they are top-heavy and lack the charming allusiveness of Rodin and the sparkle and fire of Nietzsche. Add to a sober and clumsy manner of thinking an enthusiasm that is not well mixed, and the result is at once heavy and yeasty. But for all that they are of value in helping disclose Wagner's development, and in showing how certain beliefs and dissatisfactions shaped themselves to an ideal of a true art and a music of the future.

Wagner, like Rodin, for many years stood alone. A man so original and revolutionary in his views and his technique and of so hungry an individualism in thought and feeling would naturally draw criticism or expose himself to neglect. Matters would hardly be mended by his often tactless utterances and his tenacity in clinging to his ideal. For it was an ideal, an earnest desire to show the way to something better, and not presumption, that led to Wagner's

attacks on Italian and French opera, and on musical and theatrical conditions in Germany. This is the high-pitched message of such early essays as *Art and Revolution* and *The Work of Art of the Future*; and there is always the shadowing and disheartening thought that things could not be worse. The refrain is throughout the same: there is no national theatre; the state does nothing for art; there are no suitable conservatories and training schools for singers; the public is indifferent and flocks stupidly to artificial and ill rendered operas and ballets; music and poetry are feeble to the point of painfulness. While there is in all this more than a hint of Schiller, there is also a great deal of bitter first-hand experience with the state, the stage, and the art criticism of the day; an experience made all the more bitter because Wagner was a man of ideals and large ambitions. In 1851 in the preface to *Opera and Drama* he deplores the artistic conditions he sees everywhere; and in the preface to the second edition, written in 1868, he protests in a mood of discouragement against the stubborn and senseless way in which the public misinterpreted his theories and music alike. And yet in those seventeen years he had composed *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger*, two of his greatest operas, and had written the text and much of the music of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

For the bitter side of these controversies one must turn to the newspapers and the pamphlets of the time.

The lighter side appears in cartoons and caricatures, many of which have been gathered by Kreowski and Fuchs in their *Richard Wagner in der Karikatur*. It is not a brilliant lot, but it shows plainly what the more unresponsive of his contemporaries attacked in Wagner: his use of dissonance; his noisiness; his musical innovations; his claim of being a poet and a prophet of musical and theatrical reform. Wagner is shown mounted, as the commander-in-chief of the German army, ready to put the French to flight with his music. Or in an orchestral scene dragons and long snakelike wisps of notes are escaping from the instruments. An Austrian cartoon pictures Wagner on his arrival in Heaven listening with a pained expression to the harp-music of the angels and calling for cymbals and trumpets. In 1869 there appeared in *L'Éclipse* a cartoon by Gill, which shows a huge ear within whose frame stands Wagner, a puny figure with a large head, hammering away at a long pin whose point is set against the ear drum. Quite as good is one by Doré. It gives a scene in the theatre after a Wagnerian opera has blared and blasted and blown its way across the orchestra to the balcony and the boxes, which are strewn with forms prostrate or bent this way and that—like corn-stalks after a hurricane. To the other group belongs an 1860 sketch by Cham in which the advocate of a music of the future is leading an orchestra of future musicians—chubby-faced babies struggling with im-

mense horn instruments. An 1876 cartoon represents Wagner in the haughtiest of attitudes, accepting the homage of Æschylus and Shakespeare. 1876 was the year of the formal opening of the *Festspielhaus* at Bayreuth, and Wagner, then in his sixty-fourth year, with much fine work to his credit and with the patronage of the King of Bavaria to back him, could afford to leave the satire of the cartoonist unnoticed, and to treat all adverse criticism with the self-assurance of a man who has worked out an artistic ideal and is watching its realization. He could enjoy success hard won, for even in the seventies difficulties arose which would have wrecked Wagner's project of an ideal theatre for the perfect blend of music and poetry, had it not been for his enterprise in taking hold, giving concerts, issuing shares. But these unpleasant experiences are not to be compared with the struggles and bitter disappointments of the forties and fifties. After the first failure of *Tannhäuser* at Dresden in 1845 Wagner wrote: "A feeling of complete isolation took possession of me. It was not my vanity; I had fooled myself with my eyes open, and now I was quite stunned. I had only one thought: to bring the public to understand and to share my views, and to accomplish its artistic education."

There is then a background of personal experience, and there is the stress and strain of a visionary but strongly espoused ideal. Without them Wagner's

artistic personality becomes unintelligible; and it is they that explain his social criticism, his advocacy of an art of the future, and his theory of the music drama.

As a social critic Wagner is not a mere fault-finder. He has reason to complain of his critics and his public for, to mention only one grievance, he had been compelled to save *Tannhäuser* from becoming a mere frame for ballets and *divertissements*. Again and again he had been irritated by the fickle or dull-witted theatre-goer. But his social criticism goes deeper: it touches the culture of his time, tests it and finds it distinctly unfavorable to genuinely great art; unfavorable because of its pretentiousness and exclusiveness; its crass materialism; its hide-bound worship of the conventional. Luxury and exclusiveness, by breaking down race consciousness, by undermining character and destroying freedom and the sense of human dignity, bring affectation, disillusionment, weariness, indifference to beauty—and what but an unideal and very feeble art could thrive in soil such as this? The taint of the academic lies on Wagner's contrast of the luxury and weak slavishness of imperial Rome with the poise, the freedom, and the art splendor of Athens; but many of his allusions to the showy exterior and inner bareness of the culture of his day and its shortsighted and commercialized aims bear

the stamp of knowledge at first hand. Worship of custom and convention he considers no less destructive a force; it is one of the worst forms of tyranny and results in an unoriginal, dead or mannered art.

Of all these things Wagner gives many instances. Modern architecture, ruled by utility instead of beauty—and a shallow utility at that—turns the Exchange into a temple; it is mechanical and fond to excess of ornament. Modern sculpture is simply decorative of rich men's houses, and even at its best lacks the life and the direct spirit of Greek sculpture, which it imitates. Modern painting has had to turn to landscape because the human drama no longer offered opportunities in beauty and significance—a strange thought of Wagner's. Modern music has become artificial and vulgarized; Beethoven has been displaced by Rossini, he of the catchy airs and mercenary point of view, and by Meyerbeer, the blatant, the theatrical, the commonplace. Why, asks Wagner in his characteristic vein, are we forced to speak well only of the dead?

Such is Wagner's social criticism. Like Tolstoy's and Nietzsche's, it is much more truly an expression of personal needs than it is a large and sound interpretation of cultural tendencies. Culture, after all, is a very complex affair, and we have grown rather distrustful of marking and damning an age by a single adjective or a group of adjectives. But this much can be said; to a self-assertive man in

need of elbow room—and such was Wagner—and a picturesque background, and to a man who, like Wagner or Nietzsche, had a dramatic, not to say theatrical idea of greatness, the third quarter of the last century would seem the dreariest and most prosy age in all history. There is this personal note in Wagner's attacks, but that is a matter of origin. Of far greater interest is the incentive; the ideal of a truer culture and a better art, which is caught at the rebound, and which in its detail parallels closely Wagner's social criticisms.

An ideal art is impossible without an ideal culture—this thought serves to interlock the three demands Wagner makes on culture and on art. Life must be free and natural; it must be rich, strong, and beautiful; and from this rich soil of life there must spring an art which is popular in the sense of being deeply rooted in the racial consciousness of man; which is individual and free; which is the complete and harmonious summing up of man's artistic nature. These are the keys to the theory of an art of the future, and of the music drama as the characteristic form of that art.

True art is racial art; art expressive of the life of the people. Whenever one class arrogates to itself the right to art, it gives an artificial and mannered art. Wagner has in mind the troubadour

poetry of France, and Italian opera of courtly origin and courtlier caprice. The one loses itself in fantastic conceits; the other changes folk-song and melody to the pyrotechnics of the aria. True art has its roots deep down in the racial and national life of a people; uproot it and it withers. It is in the religious and social consciousness that this *Volks-geist*, this spirit of the people, shows itself, and there it works with the unconsciousness and sureness of an elemental force. Mythology is a perfect treasure-house of poetry. Folk-song and folk-music are the pulsings of a rich racial life. Wagner never wearies of pointing to the mass of legend, myth, and racial life which marks the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and gives freshness and force to what otherwise would have been a mere picture of a courtly life; he shows Greek religion to have been the source of inspiration for Greek tragedy. Not that he wishes art to be popular in the ordinary sense; few men have cared less for the approval of the mob than he. But why blame the rabble for not understanding a work of art? Blame rather the culture that produces the rabble: the base, ugliness-stricken culture of the day and its trivial art. With a reawakening of the *Volks-geist* and an artistic regeneration in view Wagner turns to Norse mythology for his material and introduces into opera the genuine folk-song and its rhythmic animation. But this ideal of his was a gradual growth, for the inspiration of much

of his earlier work was indirect and artificial. *Die Feen* attaches itself to Gozzi; *Das Liebesverbot* to Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*; *Rienzi* to Bulwer-Lytton's novel. Here as well as in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* much is artificial and popular in a bad sense, for processions and theatrical tricks abound, and the music itself according to Wagner's later estimate has more than a touch of Italian and French corruption. There is no artifice in *Tristan und Isolde*; the action there is almost bare in its simplicity and directness; picturesqueness and variety of incident yield to intensity. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* owes much to the *Edda*. It is a drama of gods and demi-gods, and of a vanishing world order, and as such is paralleled by tales of Kronos and Zeus, and by the Æschylean tragedy with its rift of fate, its dark disclosure of an older and cruder type of gods, and its message of a new and deeper wisdom.

It is not only in plot and character that Wagner seeks to lay bare the racial root of consciousness; in every one of his operas and music dramas he draws on folk-song and folk-music. The spinning song in *Der Fliegende Holländer*; the mermaid song in *Das Rheingold*; the songs of the sea in *Tristan und Isolde*; the song of the forge in *Siegfried*; and the Valkyrie battle-cry in *Die Walküre*—one and all, are as far as could be from the ornamental and artificial, and from the musically corrupt. They rouse an earlier, slumbering consciousness, and fitful echoes of the lure

of the sea, of battle-lust, of the joy of work, of intense living, and of confused wondering. The half-absence of self-consciousness in Siegfried, to which Wagner refers in a letter to Roeckel, and the lack of clear self-knowledge on the part of Parsifal, are in line with Wagner's belief that this earlier consciousness is one of feeling, and that it must be recovered by intuition. In this sense art is the great recoverer of a submerged life.

It is curious that artists like Wagner, Rodin, Tolstoy, and Maeterlinck, so dissimilar in aims and equipment, should all in this one respect think and feel alike. For Tolstoy as for Wagner art cuts beneath the reflective consciousness and liberates something more direct and vital—social and religious feelings; and yet when it comes to interpreting these feelings the whole span of a *Weltanschauung* separates the robust optimism and one-syllable Christianity of Tolstoy from the pessimism and mysticism of the composer of *Götterdämmerung* and *Parsifal*. For Rodin also art is the recoverer of an earlier inner life, a life of great dynamic force, of muscular effort, of lust, of passion, of self-torment, of the sting of excitement, of the glory of change. For Maeterlinck it is not the recovery of unrest, but the recovery of calm, that art gives. The artist gets back of words, masks and artifices, and uncovers a realm of expressive silence, of spiritual beauty, quiet and self-possessed. It is a curious fact also that under the pressure of

this view of art Rodin was forced to violate certain rules of academic sculpture, Wagner was led to abandon the traditional form of the opera and to insist on the music drama as the intimate fusion of poetry and music, and Maeterlinck, quite as eager for a stronger and larger expressiveness, set about constructing the *drame intime*, the drama of volatile experiences, of pauses and silences, of premonitions and glimpses of the inner life.

- *True art must be individual and free.* This is Wagner's second demand. In modern life custom stifles the growth of individuality; the natural is voted crude or immoral; artifice takes the place of natural strength. The artist of the future feels this and turns to the old myths and legends, for there the racial consciousness is still creative. Character has heroic grandeur and sharp contours, and life is still strong and hot to the taste.

Nothing brings one closer to Wagner than this emphasis on individuality and freedom. The forces in play are many; the personal motives at work, highly complex. A hostile or stupidly appreciative lot of critics, an ununderstanding public, domestic unhappiness, and dislike for the sordid business of making a living must be counted in; and to all this must be added the pressure of a creative impulse, the need of the monumental and largely proportioned, and a true kingliness mixed with not a little alloy.

The man's letters reveal much of this. Passage after passage strikes the note of unhappiness, loneliness, rebellion, contempt until in a letter to Frau Wille in 1864 there is a bitter tirade against philistinism and its "ghastly shrewdness" and "ridiculous bluntness in the valuation of the things of life." How can it comprehend the artist, the "deeper spirit"? A letter written to Otto Wesendonck in 1859 shows clearly a restive and weary mood, but shows quite as clearly Wagner's self-assurance and the imperative impulse to create.

"Perhaps silence would have been better. Yet this is the only language in which I can convey to human understanding what certainly is often not understood when I simply express my longing for the *end*. All that I suffer, I bear through nothing but the power of the wish to have peace and security about me in this world of robbers, to be able—forgetting all my misery—to set to work again! Believe me, I no longer have a wish save this. Of late I have again come to the lively conviction that I can renounce even the performance of *Tristan*, and everything, only to know that I may work on undisturbed! Now I am bracing myself, to get air again for my last act of *Siegfried*: breathe I but that once more, then nothing else matters to me. For this I see: I am entirely what I am, only when I am *creating*. The actual performance of my works belongs to a more settled time, to a time which I must first prepare for by my sufferings!

"My most congenial art-friends have nothing

beyond astonishment for my new works; every one who stands at all near to our public art-life feels too feeble for hope. There I meet nothing save pity and sadness! And they really are right! Nothing teaches me better, how terribly I have overleapt all around me, than a good, sharp look—down from myself—on those who stand between me and just that world.

“So let me work myself completely out; oh, had I nothing, nothing else to do upon this earth! Rest! Rest! that the inner torch may burn soft and bright, which flickers so wildly under the breath of this life of want, and—soon must be extinct. Let me but create the works I there was given, in peaceful, glorious Switzerland, there with my gaze upon the lofty, gold-wreathed mountains: they are wonder-works, and nowhere else could I have conceived them. Let me finish them: then am I done with and redeemed! But ask nothing, nothing else from me, and don't rejoice when ‘successes’ beckon me: their price is fearful.”

These personal matters help explain what would otherwise be puzzling: Wagner's theory of the two forces that work themselves out in this free, natural life and in all true art. He calls them *Lebensbedürfniss* and *Liebesbedürfniss*. The first is the life-impulse itself, which causes a plant to suck nourishment from the soil; the animal to grow at the expense of its environment; and man to assert his will ruthlessly by using and absorbing everything that is needful to his own full growth. There is a hint of

Schiller's *Stofftrieb* in all this, and a foreshadowing of Schopenhauer's *will to live*. *Liebesbedürfniss* means yearning for love, for sympathy, for self-sacrifice. In 1851 Wagner interpreted Lohengrin as the type of this force. What draws Lohengrin to earth is the need of being loved, of being understood, of finding himself in the utter faith and self-sacrifice of a woman. Wagner had the courage to see in this situation the universal tragedy of modern life: the yearning of the inspired artist for the human heart and the shattering of a possible happiness because of lack of utter faith. In Siegfried he sees the embodiment of the *life-impulse*.

"I had in the concentrated image of Siegfried reached the point of seeing before me man in the most natural and most joyous fulness of his sensuously animated being. No historical dress hampered him; no relation from without in any way blocked the movement of his being. This movement, coming from the innermost source of his joy of life, is such that with error and confusion, due to the wildest play of passion, accumulating to his destruction, the hero never for a moment even with death threatening finds the flow of this inner source checked and never for a moment recognizes any other authority over himself than just the necessary outflowing of this restless, seething well of life."

This is the glorious "yea-saying to life" that caught Nietzsche's heart; but its relation to Wagner's inner development as an Artist and Thinker is far from

simple. It is clear that in Siegfried's character an idealistic turn is given to the life-impulse. The world is still a mere setting, but a setting, not for the devouring rage of a beast of prey, but for the vigorous self-assertion of a richly gifted nature, an undaunted will and a clear intelligence. The first conception of young Siegfried reflects a mood of optimism, and was, according to Wagner's own testimony, meant for a picture of the heroic soul in its victorious rush and happiness.

As such it is a reaction from the religious asceticism and pessimism of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. There Christian motifs such as faith, salvation through renunciation of carnal desire, and otherworldliness are easily traced. The jump, in 1848, from this nay-saying to Siegfried's pagan yea-saying is so startling that we may not be willing to accept Wagner's explanation, offered in 1851, that *Tannhäuser* is an arraignment not of the sensuous joy of life, but of present cultural conditions, which make all but a distorted and perverted joy of life impossible. Still we can trace definitely, side by side with the gospel of asceticism, the demand for a certain robustness and sensuous massiveness of life; a demand voiced by Siegfried and *Lohengrin* alike—two men unlike except in strong individuality and dignity. This notion of dignity gives the clue to Wagner's short, vitriolic essay, *Art and Revolution*, written in 1849, which is a bitter attack on

Christianity and its doctrines of humility and other-worldliness. They are held responsible alike for the weak and slave-like culture of the masses and for the hypocrisy and aggressive greed of all exploiters of the masses; they are held to take away from life strength, dignity, beauty and freedom: all the essentials, in fact, of a liberal culture and an art of distinction.

Back of this attack is an ideal, that of a re-shaping of culture, of a righting of man's wrongs. This may or may not mean a moral and political revolution, but it means at least that human life must be allowed to develop freely to its full stature and full happiness. Renunciation dwarfs life; convention stifles it; weakness and neglect of its full pith despoils man of his happiness. There is a curious doubleness in this ideal: There are two demands, one of which concerns social happiness, the other a social regeneration in terms of nobility, strength, and dignity. For the young revolutionary on the eve of 1848 the two seemed one, but they were soon driven far apart in his thought. Success and other happiness values do not measure the worth of a strong and dignified self-assertion which is victorious even in defeat. In this sense Wagner's own devotion to an artistic ideal, in spite of discouragement, is an expression of an idealized type of the *life-impulse*. He had to create, had often to work feverishly at the cost of exquisite pain, but pleasure of creating,

intense as it was with him, could hardly account for the drive and volume of his artistic self-expression. If success and the solid achievements of happiness measure a man, Siegfried is defeated. But the measure is false, for out of the wreckage of his life there rises a strong and triumphant personality; an individual who is ever himself; who is nature, instinct, joy of life; who opposes nature to human law and convention.

* Wagner in 1864 says of his *Ring der Nibelungen*: "With this conception I had unconsciously gained the truth concerning things human. Here everything is tragic through and through, and the will that meant to fashion a world in harmony with its wish could in the end gain nothing more satisfying than to break itself in a downfall nobly borne." Originally the dramatic idea of the trilogy was quite another one, turning on such conventional ideas as the destructiveness of gold, the death-wages of hypocrisy and broken faith, the shattering of a morally inferior world by a better one. All this stood out baldly in the closing words of *Götterdämmerung*. These words Wagner struck out; they were replaced by such as seem of the very tincture of Schopenhauer's pessimism and of its doctrine of a world of illusion and restless desire to be negated in a spirit of *Entsagung*, resignation. Brünnhilde passes from the scene, *wunsch- und wahnlos*. In a letter to Roeckel, Wagner explains that as a poet and a composer he had

intuitively anticipated Schopenhauer's theories, that *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* were tragedies of *Entsagung*, and that in not seeing this he had simply misread his artistic intentions. A statement like this must be taken cautiously; it is impossible to slur the change from an earlier revolutionary optimism to pessimism; impossible also not to connect this change with the conscious, strong influence of Schopenhauer. In 1854 Wagner became acquainted with Schopenhauer's philosophy; from the very first he admired it intensely, and it has left its mark on all his later work. I do not count myself among those who see in Wagner's pessimism a natural tendency, forced into the open by this contact with Schopenhauer. While much depends, of course, on what is meant by pessimism, there is in Wagner an assertive note of robust and confident power, of strife, of feverish creativeness, which seems the very opposite of pessimism. Fits of depression there were in his life: moments when he felt that he was waging a losing fight against stupidity and malice; but there is all the difference in the world between this idea of a will hampered and blocked in its purposes and the idea of the illogical, suicidal nature of the will. Never did Wagner look upon himself as the dupe of an irrational cosmic force driving him headlong; never did he doubt himself or his artistic ideals; firm self-assurance marks his letters, his autobiography, and his essays. Self-assurance

Schopenhauer also had in abundance; and he despatched academic philosophy as quickly as Wagner did Italian opera. But Schopenhauer lacked utterly the artistic need and joy of creation from which Wagner's self-assurance sprang. To the drive and push of this *Lebensbedürfniss* Wagner gives himself utterly.

This leads directly back to Wagner's double interpretation of the power to live, of will. On the one hand he emphasizes its strength and its restless activity; on the other its grandeur and nobility; dwelling, however, on the latter much more strongly both as a man and as an artist. His is an idealizing reading of the will, for what interests him is not the shattering of the individual so much as greatness of soul in the presence of disaster, calm strength or an ecstatic self-drowning of the will. That is the way his artistic genius reacts to the philosophy of Schopenhauer. Few problems are more interesting than this more or less unconscious reshaping of a philosopher's world-view by an artist in response to the demands of an imperious temperament. Even where Wagner seems closest to Schopenhauer, in *Tristan und Isolde* or in *Parsifal*, he is still distant by just that much. A *Tristan und Isolde* by Schopenhauer! what would it have been? One may well imagine it. His cynical remarks on women are familiar enough: so is his unflattering interpretation of love. Nature intent on the race rather than

the individual works her will by that loveliest and deadliest of baits: woman. Schopenhauer would have shown us a Tristan and an Isolde stung by unquenchable desire, driven about blindly by the mad fury of love—only to be swept away, like all nature's fools, with the will shaken out of them. Resignation to him is the essential thing in tragedy; the tragic hero takes leave of us with "the will to live quite dead" in him. It might be going too far to accuse Schopenhauer of glorifying limpness; he has his ideal of salvation through art and through a religion of sympathy, but on the whole his emphasis is dangerously the other way. The world is a mad-house and a slaughter-house; in it are staged the insane antics of will. This cosmic indictment quite overshadows the idea of salvation and gives his philosophy a turn toward the negative.

But what about Wagner! The contrast between night and day which recurs again and again in *Tristan und Isolde* seems a genuine bit of Schopenhauer. Night is apostrophized as the eternal; the all-soothing; destroyer of the false, garish lights of day and of the illusions of life—glory, gain, individuality. And these words

—dann
bin ich die Welt,
liebe-heiligstes Leben,
wonne-hehrstes Weben
nie-wieder-Erwachens

wahnlos
hold bewusster Wunsch,

seem an echo of the Nirvana, and its destruction of will and individuality. But the whole drama reflects an interpretation and a play of motives quite Wagner's own and in many ways quite remote from Schopenhauer's point of view. Schopenhauer had interpreted sexual love as one of the strongest expressions of will, one of the master forces that keep the earth spinning about in restless torment; and had held salvation to be possible only by its destruction. To all this Wagner objected from the very first; and that he should have objected to this ascetic ideal is not at all surprising, for as a man and an artist he was erotic. It is curious to see how in his essays his prose in its yeasty ferment again and again turns into erotic imagery. A robust sexuality marks his poetic creations; of this no drama of his has more than *Tristan und Isolde*, which is Wagner's apotheosis of sexual love. The whole spirit of the play—music as well as words—is passionate ecstasy and passionate yearning. There are changes in this sea of feeling: it is surging or choppy or smooth with the smoothness of long, undulating swells. The passion of love, which to Schopenhauer was the chief obstacle in the way of the killing off of will and individuality, is to Wagner the very force that saves us from the slavery to will and individuality; the very force that makes both *Tristan* and *Isolde* long for the drowning of the

Self in the Other. Death, night, Nirvana are merely the symbol of this merger of consciousness. This is a psychological interpretation of love, not a biological one, like Schopenhauer's; and, psychologically, passionate love is marked by unconsciousness of self, by the desire for complete self-absorption in the Other, by its consuming and fusing power.

There is much more of Wagner than of Schopenhauer in *Tristan und Isolde*; and it may serve as a striking illustration of the degree to which both Wagner's art and his theories were influenced by peculiarities of artistic genius and personality. The same subjective influences shape his ideal of an art of the future and the demands he makes on that art.

Genuine art, then, must be natural, racially grounded, individual, and free. But Wagner's third demands tops these in importance. *True art must be a compact and complete expression of the artistic consciousness.*

"The artistic man can find complete satisfaction only in the union of all art forms in a common work of art; he is in every isolation of his artistic powers not free, not completely what he might be. In this common work of art he is free and what he might be. The true aim of art is the all-inclusive. Every one who is truly art-inspired develops his peculiar endowment to its highest point, not in order to glorify

this special endowment, but to glorify man through art as such." Of such artistic wholeness Wagner had before him the example of Goethe; and men like Herder and Schiller had sketched in the picture of a culture from which a wholehearted and complete art was to spring. Suffering sharply from this background of idealism at its best, romanticism with its onesidedness, opportunism, political and cultural littleness, looseness, and dulness would be caught in Wagner's criticism.

Wagner takes stock of his time and finds the conditions distinctly unfavorable. Art, originally one, expressing itself in three interpenetrating art forms, music, poetry, and the dance, has been torn asunder, piecemeal, by modern life. Each and every art claims independence and gains helplessness. The drama has lost by the abolition of the Greek chorus. Music cut adrift from words and vocal expression has too often become a filmy, nebulous thing. Whatever attempts have been made to recombine the several arts have proved failures. What else was to be expected from putting them all in the same pot and giving them a good shaking? The very worst of such attempts is modern opera on Italian and French lines. There character has nothing to do with the words, and the words nothing with the music. The ballet is a *divertissement* interpolated anywhere and artificial to the core. Processions are meant to catch the eye; scenery, sentimentality or

barbaric splendor, music that is sweetish, catchy, full of artifice: these are meant to complete the fascination. The aria becomes the trick-box of the sleight-of-hand singer. Libretto and score are slammed together. The composer could not breathe life into the mannikins of the librettist; he had to stretch words till they would stretch no farther, and then had to cut loose from his text altogether and seek compensation in the curlicues of the aria and in daubings of tone color or in historical haberdashery and in the full choric accompaniment to the aria. The sounding unison of the chorus, as it is to be found in Meyerbeer, is to Wagner simply the decorative stage *ensemble* turned into many-voiced noise. The hunt for exotic subjects, folk-melodies and dances is curiosity turned wild. There is in these Oriental operas no understanding of Oriental life. It is all a matter of curio-hunting and padding. These devices of the librettist are aimed at the public; the composer in turn does the best he can with a monotonous and often ridiculous libretto and seeks to get a little variety and characterization on the side. As a result music and text fall apart. The music either embroiders the text with pattern after pattern or makes away with it altogether. Wagner cites an instance of such embroidery. It is one of the artifices of opera to take a verse, have it sung with the stress on one word, then have it sung with the stress on another until it all becomes a

silly, meaningless repetition. It is another artifice to stretch words and music to conceal an inner poverty of score and libretto.

In all these criticisms there appears a sincere interest in a very important æsthetic principle, that of organic structure. It would be instructive to test the more recent French and Italian opera from this point of view. Operas like *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* are close-knit in structure and appeal. They show an advance in musical characterization quite as clearly as does the radically different music of Strauss. Debussy has developed an atmospheric and emotionally fluid music which contrasts strongly with the sharply jointed and melody-spiced music of classical opera. In many recent operas, however, the curse of the exotic is still as strong as it was in *The Magic Flute*. There is something childish about Puccini's superficial exploitation of the West and of Japan in *The Girl of the Golden West* and *Madame Butterfly*. The music is compelling in spots, but as a whole such operas contrast unfavorably with the naturalness and basic strength of the Wagnerian music drama.

Wagner's theory of the music drama as the perfect expression of an art of the future shapes itself rapidly on the basis of these two constructive demands: of organic unity; of completeness and breadth of artistic inspiration.

"The highest common work of art is the drama; it can exist in its fulness only when there is contained in it each single art in its fulness.

"The true drama is possible only as emerging from the common expressive impulse of all the arts directed toward a common publicity. Each single art form can unfold itself to a complete understanding only by combining with the others in the drama, for the aim of each single art form can be gained completely only by means of the sympathetic and enlightening coöperation of them all in the drama."

In the music drama poetry, music and the dance will all have their place. Painting appears as scene-painting; architecture is assigned the task of building an ideal theatre, which is to be the perfect expression of the beauty and dignity of art. Wagner continues:

"In the all inclusive work of art of the future not a single, richly developed capacity of the several arts remains unused. In it they all come to their own. The tonal art developed so characteristically and variously in instrumental music can be pushed to its utmost bent. It in turn will stimulate the art of dramatic dancing to new inventions and distend to unforeseen fulness the spirit of poetry. In its isolation music has fashioned for itself an organ capable of unlimited expression: the orchestra. The tonal language of Beethoven, brought into the drama by the orchestra, is quite a new thing in it. Architecture and scenic landscape painting place the dramatic artist and his presentation in a physical

setting, and furnish a rich, self-renewing, and significant background. But the orchestra, that living body of infinitely manifold harmony, furnishes to the individual artist a substratum of the natural in its artistic and human nature. The orchestra is, so to speak, the ground of infinite, all embracing feeling, from which the individual feeling of the singer can grow to its full stature; it dissolves the rigid, immovable substance of the actual scene into a liquid, soft, yielding, impressionable, ethereal something whose limitless ground is feeling itself."

"Thus joining in a rhythmic procession, the allied arts show themselves, now singly, now in pairs, as the dramatic action requires it. At one time the plastic art of the mime hearkens to the passionless reflection of thought; at another, the impulse of determined thought pours itself into the immediate expressiveness of gesture; at another, music alone can express the flow of feeling or the seizure by emotion; then again all three of the arts, linked together, will visualize and actualize the idea of the drama."

Back of passages like these there is a very definite theory of the function of poetry and music and the relation between poet and composer. According to Wagner, music and poetry alike address themselves to feeling. The poet does it by means of language. But language is the joint product of intellect and feeling; by means of it man has been able to fix his ideas and to pass his experiences on to his fellows. In becoming articulate it has become crystallized, blocked out into so many sharply sun-

dered ideas; in its further development it has become more abstract, more nearly the servant of the intellect; and it has become brittle and colorless. The poet must restore its early fluidity and emotional power; he must break up these intellectual blocks and again make of language an emotional continuum full of contrasts melting into one another. This is not an easy thing for the poet to do, with the limited resources at his disposal. Wagner suggests various devices, such as choice of concrete, full-blooded words; rhyme; rhythmic accentuation; dispensing with connectives; alliteration. He himself makes use of the old German *Stabreim*, and its alliterative pairing of words. In the phrase *Wohl und Weh*, weal and woe,—the illustration is Wagner's,—the alliteration combines to the unity almost of a compound two words separated by the whole span of the feeling horizon. Every one of Wagner's music dramas yields many examples of all of these devices, but the richest of all is *Tristan und Isolde*. There you have the poetry of passion, of pure feeling; language has been stripped bare of its intellectual elements, of connectives and thought structure; the words chosen are so many thrills and beats of passion; so many rapid strokes leading to a shattering *crescendo* or to ecstatic reverberations of feeling. Of this three examples:

The first is from the second act:

Tristan

Isolde! Geliebte!

Isolde

Tristan! Geliebter!

Beide

Bist du mein?

Hab' ich dich wieder?

Darf ich dich fassen?

Kann ich mir trauen?

Endlich! Endlich!

An meiner Brust!

Fühl ich dich wirklich?

Bist du es selbst?

Dies deine Augen?

Dies dein Mund?

Hier deine Hand?

Hier dein Herz?

Bin ich's? Bist du's?

Halt ich dich fest?

Ist es kein Trug?

Ist es kein Traum?

O Wonne der Seele!

O süsse, hehrste,

kühnste, schönste,

seligste Lust!

Ohne Gleiche!

Ueberreiche!

Ueberselig!

Ewig! Ewig!

Ungeahnte,
nie gekannte,
überschwänglich
hoch erhab'ne!
Freude-Jauchzen!
Lust-Entzücken!
Himmel-höchstes
Welt-Entrücken!
Mein Tristan!
Mein Isolde!
Tristan!
Isolde!
Mein und dein!
Immer ein!
Ewig, ewig ein!

The second is from the same act:

.
Nun banne das Verlangen,
holder Tod,
sehnend verlangter
Liebes-Tod!
In deinen Armen,
dir geweiht,
ur-heilig Erwärmen,
von Erwachens Not befreit.
Wie es fassen?
Wie sie lassen,
diese Wonne,
fern der Sonne,

fern der Tage
Trennungs-Klage?
Ohne Wahren
sanftes Sehnen,
ohne Bangen
süss Verlangen;
ohne Wehen
hehr Vergehen,
ohne Schmachten
hold Umnachten;
ohne Scheiden,
ohne Leiden,
traut allein,
ewig heim,
in ungemess'nen Räumen
übersel'ges Träumen.
Du Isolde,
Tristan ich,
nicht mehr Tristan,
nicht Isolde;
ohne Nennen,
ohne Trennen,
neu Erkennen,
neu Entbrennen;
endlos ewig
ein-bewusst:
heiss erglühter Brust
höchste Liebes-Lust!

The third are Isolde's last words:

.
Höre ich nur
diese Weise,
die so wunder-
voll und leise,
Wonne klagend
alles sagend,
mild versöhnend
aus ihm tönend,
auf sich schwingt,
in mich dringt,
hold erhallend
um mich klingt?
Heller schallend,
mich umwallend,
sind es Wellen
sanfter Lüfte?
Sind es Wogen
wonniger Däfte?
Wie sie schwellen,
mich umrauschen,
soll ich atmen,
soll ich lauschen?
Soll ich schlürfen,
untertauchen,
süss in Düften
mich verhauchen?
In des Wonnemeeres
wogendem Schwall,

in der Duft-Wellen
tönendem Schall,
in des Welt-Atems
wehendem All—
ertrinken—
versinken—
unbewusst—
höchste Lust!

In passages like these Wagner has made the most of the emotional resources of the poet. But he is well aware that they are limited, that the poet cannot by the sheer force of his isolated art express the dramatic idea completely. Poetry must enlist the services of music, vocal and orchestral. Pure tone and melodic theme give the tone-color of language; more than that, by passing from pole to pole of feeling—stressing, grading, reconciling—they give a language that is liquidescent as well as iridescent. Harmonics is only a further step in this subtle mixing and blending of feeling. But what of orchestral music and its place in the music drama? Wagner does not mean it to be a mere accompaniment to the score, nor an independent music without words; every bar of it must be organically related to the dramatic idea. To Wagner the orchestra, like the chorus in a Greek tragedy, is the interpreter of the action and its underlying motives. It is memory, and it is premonition (*Ahnung*)—a swift messenger

to gather in the past and set it down in the present or the forerunner of dark forebodings, shapeless fears or half-formed hopes.*

*The following passage illustrates Wagner's theory of the emotional fluidity of music and of the part the orchestra is to play:

"While the composer is still dependent on the original form of the dance and never dares to seek expressiveness beyond its boundaries, the poet calls to him: 'Leap boldly into the full waves of the sea' of music; if you do it hand in hand with me you will never lose touch with what every one understands best. I place you firmly on the ground of dramatic action, and this action, at the time of its scenic representation, is of all poems the most easily understood. Spread your melody boldly so that it pours itself over your work like an incessant stream; express in it what I am silent about, because only you can say it; and I, though silent, shall express all because I am your guide.'

"In truth the greatness of a poet may be measured by his expressive silence about the inexpressible. It is the composer who seizes upon this silence and expresses it in sound. The form of this sound-ing silence is infinite melody.

"Naturally the symphonic poet cannot shape this melody without his peculiar instrument: the orchestra. It is needless to say that he must not like the Italian composer use the orchestra simply as a huge guitar for the accompaniment of the aria.

"The orchestra will in the proposed drama occupy about the place the Chorus occupied in the dramatic action of the Greeks. The chorus there was always present, watching the motives and springs of the developing action, seeking to fathom these motives and to arrive at some judgment. There is one difference, however. The part of the chorus was a reflective one; it stood aloof from the action and its motives. Not so the orchestra of the modern symphonic poet. So intimately does it share in the motives of the action that it not only as a system of harmonics makes a definite expression of melody possible, but keeps melody itself in the necessary state of continued fluidity, and thus reveals the motives of feeling with a convincing impressiveness."

In this principle of musical continuity lies the secret of Wagner's use of *Leitmotif*. In its crudest form *Leitmotif* is simply a musical tag; it is a partly imitative and partly symbolical method of ushering in and labelling a character or an action. As such it marks better than anything else could the antiquated technique of the opera. Only the novel at its worst would stoop to so mechanical and stereotyped a device as having the hero invariably flick the ashes off a cigarette, the villain always talking the same deep-dyed villainy, the characters labelled by set phrases and recurrent peculiarities of behavior and bearing. It is not surprising to find Wagner impatient of the endless talk of *Leitmotif* in his music dramas; he is merely setting himself against stereotyped characterization. With him *Leitmotif* is a much less artificial and mechanical thing. He is not above using it occasionally as a tag or as a flourish of character, but on the whole his interpretation and use of it are subtle and original. The Wagnerian *Leitmotif* is not repetition, but repetition with a difference; it is a recurrent musical phrase modified, reinterpreted to suit changes in dramatic idea and music. Back of these modifications is the interpretative function of orchestral music—its stresses, its pauses, its ironic comment, its enfolding acceptance. This amounts to a threefold use of *Leitmotif*: for purposes of progressive characterization; as a principle of dramatic and musical con-

tinuity; as a complicating and enriching principle. Far from merely marking or labelling character, it is to uncover its hidden forces and its intricate development, and to show its incessant counterplay to ever modified external forces. It is to be a principle of continuity, dramatic and musical. The mere mechanical repetition of the same musical phrase would have the reverse effect: it would stand out like the recurrent blare of a trumpet or would punctuate the action with the monotony of blows from a hammer. But when the phrase is modified, as it is in the Wagnerian *Leitmotif*, it serves to bind past and present in the web and woof of a continuous texture. It is also responsible for much of the richness of Wagner's music dramas. The dramatic idea is constantly defining and re-defining itself in characters and plot, is evolving and dissolving in greater and greater complications of unrest; the music is constantly shifting its values, is soothing, vibrant, stormy in turn; is constantly flooding the moment with all that went before. What could be more stimulating than this method of allowing full value to contrasts and conflicts while gathering them up into a ceaseless flow of change and development? What Wagner's music lacks in delicacy of *bouquet*, it makes up in richness of blend, in volume, in *tang*.

To set Wagner the Thinker over against Wagner the Artist, and then to judge the one immeasurably

inferior to the other, is a serious mistake; it is too much like an attempt to separate the inseparable. What of Wagner the reflective artist or Wagner the thinker, whose thought is at heart simply an artistic demand? Testing the truth or soundness of Wagner's theories of art seems to me unprofitable business; but to see in them the play of an artistic personality, the ideal and credo of an artist to whom thought itself—as well as music or poetry—is a means of artistic self-expression, seems well worth while. The influence of Schiller and Schopenhauer may be admitted; so may the academic taint in most of Wagner's essays; but enough remains that is expressive of his own artistic self. His attack on the culture of his day is borrowed in part, but it is not in what he borrowed that the significance and interest of this attack lie. Rather do they lie in a strength of conviction which is itself nothing but the sustaining surface of an ideal of art. The same holds good on the whole of his constructive theory of the music drama. None of it is so much cold, hard thinking; it is the reflective artist who takes the plunge, and what he brings to the surface is a tangle of artistic motifs.

If it be granted that Wagner's theories as well as his music and poetry are the work of the creative artist there remains the task of getting the Wagner stamp: the thing that serves to mark the artistic consciousness that is back of this thought-tinted

art and color-soaked thought. That would be an easy matter if a consciousness like that of Maeterlinck were to be dealt with. We should then need nothing but his own comment: "Nothing in the whole world is so athirst for beauty as the soul, nor is there anything to which beauty clings so readily"; and an understanding of the soft, clear beauty that glows in his essays and plays alike. But Wagner's is far from simple. One word would not mark him; nor would two. He is nothing if not complex, in character, in development, in method, and in ideal. In describing his artistic personality one might use the terms *character* and *dramatic quality*, provided—and this is the all-important proviso—character were here defined as *individuality, strength, intensity*; and *dramatic quality*, in terms of *conflict* and *transforming movement*. Both as an artist and as a thinker Wagner has character. His music is individual, strong and passionate; his essays are personal reactions, intense and high-flavored in style; and in his art and his prose alike there is a lack of delicacy and self-restraint: a defect that is the very man himself. As for dramatic quality, there is plenty of a thoroughly characteristic kind. It expresses itself in Wagner's life and work first of all as conflict, as a struggle between such opposing forces as optimism and pessimism, need of life and need of love; then as transforming movement. There are other instances of an artistic consciousness that

is dramatic at heart: Browning, Rodin, Nietzsche; and, with certain reservations, Hegel; but at one point or another there is a sharp contrast. Both Rodin and Wagner are elemental, passionate, and dramatic in the sense of giving titanic struggles. There the likeness ends. Rodin's world-view is the simpler; he means his art to express cosmic struggle and unrest, cosmic passion and yearning. Dramatic in this sense, he is not dramatic in another; he gives no cosmic dialectic, no play and counterplay of great forces, no transforming clash of ideals. But these are the things that make up half the dramatic power of *Tannhäuser* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Where Rodin is farthest Hegel seems nearest. Reality is for him nothing but dialectic; he gives not only the stress of thought, but its dramatic evolution by means of a chain of conflicts. In this sense his philosophic genius is dramatic to the core. It is significant that he has given a profound theory of the drama in terms of an antagonism of ideals, and hinted at the principle of emotional fluidity in music. But his life work in philosophy lacks full dramatic power; thought-dialectic seems thin and ghostly when set over against the massiveness and the spontaneous, electrifying touch of passion-dialectic. Nietzsche has caught the spirit of life as a contest without end, but his dramatic genius is much more subjective than Wagner's. Nor is Wagner's like Schopenhauer's. The dra-

matic is not the deepest or most essential thing about Schopenhauer, neither a world-butchery nor a Nirvana being favorable to it. And it must be remembered that Schopenhauer, for all his brilliant theory of music, championed classical music, as he did elsewhere classical architecture. They seem to touch in their emphasis on conflict, but Wagner adds what Schopenhauer lacks, the principle of transforming movement. It is not present in Schopenhauer's theory of the successive objectifications of will—so many stone steps or separate blocks; it is present in Wagner's prose, where an imagination at once heavy and impatient pushes thought into thought and harmony into discord; or better still in his music: a music of violent contrasts, of fusings, and of a constantly changing life.

Understood in this way, *character* and *dramatic quality* may serve to mark Wagner the Artist and the Thinker.

V

HEGEL

*And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies.*

—SHAKESPEARE.

AT first sight Hegel seems very unpromising material. What in the way of interesting art criticism or of a sympathetic theory of art can be expected of a man who grinds everything to powder between a pedantic terminology and an aggressive method? What place has the artistic in the personality of this intellectual contortionist? And why, if we do not care for contortions, should we pay so high a price of admission to this most difficult of all philosophies?

I can well understand the temptation to ask such questions. One has to break into Hegel's system by main force; and will find there among much of value a great deal that is worthless and puzzling. It must be admitted that his æsthetics share the defects of that system. Of his keen interest in art there can be no doubt; he spent much of his leisure in the picture galleries of Berlin and at art exhibitions, and at Vienna and Paris he had more than a

taste of Italian opera and Shakespeare. He lacks technical knowledge just where it counts most heavily—in music and sculpture; it is here that he is weakest. But his illustrations from poetry and painting are happily chosen, and his theories illuminating as well as profound. Everywhere he shows imagination and judgment, although in fine perceptions and delicate touches he is excelled by philosophers like Schelling and Nietzsche. As for his personality, it promised little: he was often ill at ease, prosy, and commonplace. Schopenhauer had the fatuous self-assurance to speak of him as “*der geistlose, plumpe Hegel*.” But the spark of genius was in this absorbed, unemotional man, this sworn enemy of romanticism. After all, his very elaborate and unprepossessing system of philosophy has its roots in the same creative imagination that shapes a work of art, and is an imaginative *tour de force* of the first order. In this dramatized romance of nature and of consciousness personality expresses itself quite as strongly and plainly as in art; and the spirit of adventure, so evident in German Romanticism, here takes on strange forms. If these things are overlooked Hegel escapes, for it is only through the interpretative imagination that his meaning can be seized.

From 1820 to the time of his death Hegel lectured on æsthetics at the University of Berlin. His general system at that time stood complete in outline;

there remained only the task of sketching in and of working out the detail of his theories on history, religion, and art. This work remained uncompleted; his lectures on æsthetics, like the others, were never put in final shape for publication. Of the two note-books on æsthetics which he left at his death, one, of the year 1818, was used in connection with his lectures at Heidelberg; the other, of 1820, gives the substance of his later course at Berlin, and is by far the more important. Much of this note-book is a compact mass of notes to guide the lecturer; parts of it, especially the introductions to the several divisions, are fully written out. From year to year loose sheets were inserted, marginal remarks added, and the manuscript changed here and there. In view of all this, the task Hotho, one of Hegel's students, set himself in 1835, of reconstructing and publishing his master's æsthetic theories, was not an easy one. What he did was to take the two books, compare with them sets of students' notes—on the assumption that they might be valuable if they could be had in large numbers—fill in what transitions seemed lacking, and give as much of Hegel's own language as he possibly could. One need not quarrel with the result, for these three volumes are rich to the point of embarrassment; so rich in fact in special and general problems that it becomes impossible to take more than an armful of this wealth at a time.

With the grave and judicial enthusiasm so characteristic of him, Hegel first takes up the problem of material and method, and widens it out into the problem of aim. To him the material of æsthetics is the beautiful in art. This he distinguishes from the beautiful in nature, for that is imperfect, incomplete, not willed as such, and therefore not reborn of the spirit.

But does this material admit of success and is it worth while? Art expresses the beautiful in so many different forms, breaks it up into so many types, is so riotously and joyously free that any orderly system of principles seems impossible. Worse still, is art really worth the attempt? Is it not after all a frivolous amusement, an entertaining and deceptive shadowplay? Hegel has the curiosity to raise these questions and the courage to answer them in the negative. Not only does he feel sure that his method can take care of even the most riotous material, but he is also a most determined and devoted champion of the dignity of art.

Nothing could be farther from Hegel's thought than a contemptuous attitude toward art, such as Plato's. It seems strange that art should be dealt its hardest blows by a man whose artistic genius shows itself in vivid and biting character sketches, in scene-painting and settings, in an ample and wonderfully flexible diction, and in a reach which allows him to handle the most abstruse problems

gracefully and profoundly. Metaphysics gives the key to the puzzle. Plato holds art to be the impoverished imitation of an imitation. Of the real world—perfect, changeless, unmoved, eternal—the world of everyday perception, of colors, sounds, and bodies, is but an imperfect copy. It is this poor copy that the artist in his turn sets himself to imitate. By flattening a tri-dimensional object out on canvas the painter distorts it, and fails to give both its complex nature and its purpose, which is the essential thing about it. Who would wish to sleep in a bed daubed on canvas? or have Homer fashion a shield or lead an army? To this any one but a philosopher would reply: Who would not prefer a carpenter's bed, imperfect as it is, to the eternal Type, or Idea of a bed? To Plato's mind art is useless and dangerous because he feels that it cheapens and distorts even the shallow world in which it moves and has its being. Small wonder then that he bowed out of his ideal commonwealth those "multiform gentlemen" the artists, fastening upon them the reproach of being pleasing tricksters and charlatans of a beggared life.

Hegel answers Plato by implication. He admits at once that if art were imitative of nature in Plato's sense and restricted to that aim it would either score a trivial and fruitless victory or have to acknowledge an utter defeat. Zeuxis may have painted grapes so astonishingly real that birds came and pecked at

them—but is it not cheapening art to judge of it in terms of imitative skill. This exceptional success means nothing; on the whole the imitative artist is hopelessly handicapped when he tries to copy natural objects literally. If Hegel had lived at a time of imitative mania in art, he might have amplified this thought of his. The painter in color and light and shade effects lacks the range and variety of nature; he cannot give the full intensity of light. The composer simply strains his art unpleasantly if he falls into the obsessions of programme-music; the microscopic novelist, too, attempts the impossible. Why then stop here where art must fail instead of pushing on? Here is where Plato and Hegel part company. Art for Hegel is not ineffective copying; it reveals reality. Far from brushing the mere surface of life, it sounds it to its very depth; that is why Hegel is impressed with its dignity and importance. “Only when it is free is fine art truly art. It fulfils its highest task only when it brings to consciousness and expresses the divine, the deepest interests of man, the largest truths of the Spirit. This task religion, philosophy, and art have in common, and each solves it in its own way.” It is the spiritual interpreter and liberator of man. It frees him from himself and from external nature; *from himself* by sparing him the rawness and oppressiveness of passion, and by giving him what is essential to all true culture—self-detachment and a rich,

creative development; *from nature* by allowing him to set the seal of the spirit on the outer world, by giving him scope to express all that is his and to find himself in all that is. In art nature is *vergeistigt*; spiritualized; reborn of the spirit.

Here are all the elements of a cultural theory of art. But Hegel takes care not to commit himself to a narrowly moral or intellectual view. It is not the purpose of art to edify, to make some scheme of social progress palatable, or to convey intellectual truth in abstract terms. But art, rightly understood and given free play, is a great cultural force, for together with philosophy and religion it has won life over to the uses of the Spirit. It has been the great teacher of man, has softened his savagery, has made him keenly responsive to the formal side of nature, and keenly alive to what he had it in him to be. The first man to etch rude drawings on his weapons or to fashion his cooking and drinking utensils in pleasing shapes freed himself from the grossly material response to impulses and passions that threatened to grip and crush his whole being. The first man to voice his feelings in music and song disengaged himself from bruising contact with life and found himself. Instead of devouring the world as material, art appropriates it as form.

Back of all this is the ideality and the *verve* of the classical period of German literature. With no constructive ideal of political or industrial strength

at hand and with no well-trained, finely discriminative art taste to single out sharply limited problems of craftsmanship and technique, German idealism poured like a flood across the field of art. Herder's eager alertness, Goethe's sane and lofty conception of art, Schiller's enthusiasm, the Romanticists with their perplexing blend of extravagance and insight—they are simply so many different instances of a force which was bound to throw all the weight on the one far-reaching problem of the place of art in the ideal development of man. Schiller had assigned to art a very high position. Into what he regarded the crass materialism and the sorry politics of his time he thrust it as the great ennobler of the human race. Hegel according to his own confession, was profoundly influenced by Schiller. But the influence of that high-minded, if somewhat vague and rhetorical, view of art did not stop with Hegel; and is to be found in Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche.

With this cultural theory in mind Hegel imposes a twofold task on art: it is to give what is essential and real in nature; and it is to express more and more effectively and largely the self-expressive and self-expansive principle which Hegel calls *Geist*, or Spirit. This task at once marks sharply the two main divisions of his æsthetics. He gives a discussion of the idea of beauty in art; and then he exhibits this idea of beauty in its dialectic, that is, in its development.

Beauty is reality shining through the sensuous medium. With this metaphysical definition the shadow of Hegel's system begins to slant across his æsthetics; and a black shadow it is. Of all philosophies Hegel's is most ingenious, most imaginative, most difficult, and, one might add, most tyrannical in the control of its parts. Nothing in it is allowed to stand by itself; and so art has to shoulder the burden of metaphysics. Reality means many things to many minds. To the common man it suggests the here and now, the tangible or something of the sort; to Plato it meant an intangible, perfect, and eternally fixed world. With Hegel it is at heart a process unfolding and expressing itself in and through experience and working itself out by a certain law of movement. This movement is from the indefinite, the abstract, the potential to the definite, the concrete, the completely actualized; and the three moments are: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. Throughout his system Hegel uses these terms and seeks to show the necessary changes of their dialectic; how a thing is affirmed, or *posited*; how its own inherent weaknesses *negate* it, or wreck it; and how a higher reaffirmation comes from the wreckage. There is implied in this movement a self-evolving, self-expressing principle which Hegel calls *Geist*, or *Spirit*. The great triad of his system—*Mind, Nature, Spirit*—represents the three acts in this profound drama of the evolu-

tion of the Spirit. Act One: a set of abstract, empty forms, onesided and therefore self-destructive. Spirit at this stage is neither concretely organized nor fully embodied. Act Two: weary of this sheer emptiness the Spirit goes out of itself into the world of nature; there it becomes self-estranged; loses itself in the external. Act Three: Spirit rouses itself from its strange, self-forgetful sleep in nature and creates for itself a realm of the ideal in art, religion, and philosophy. It has overcome its unfilled vagueness. It has taken hold of itself and become strong and rich through its adventures. Its life has swung full circle, but what a difference in strength, substance, and self-mastery between its outgoing and home coming!

All this may seem romance clad in a most disheartening jargon and marked by loose talk and forced transitions. But there is a certain fascination about this world drama in which the Spirit creates itself and passes with an orderliness at once ghostly and telling to ever richer phases of development.

Hegel never puts this drama quite so baldly as I have put it; but it inheres deeply in his system. Beauty in art, whose definition is our present concern, belongs to the home curve of this dramatic adventure of the Spirit: the creation of an ideal realm, as Hegel calls it. If it is true that the interpretative imagination furnishes the key to Hegel, then the meaning of his theory of reality and his con-

ception of beauty might be made clear by the parallelism of a tragedy like *King Lear*. No one would deny that *King Lear* is a play of profound significance or that this significance is a development. The interest is cumulative and grows from scene to scene. At first it is extraneous and direct; the characters are as yet vague, unfilled, or their appeal is a narrow one. In the partition scene Lear is perfectly individualized, but only as a peevish old man; Regan and Goneril are two evil shadows; Cordelia gives but the promise of her later rich self. The Gloster scenes are brutally direct. But we become conscious of profound parallelisms; broader issues; larger interests; enriched and universalized character, as with crest after crest of disaster the tragic interest pounds its way. The significance, or meaning, of *King Lear* is not something outside and beyond: it is just this self-evolving and self-deepening spirituality; this passing from the outer to the inner, from the abstract to the concrete, from the particular or the bare universal to the concrete universal. The tragedy is alive with passion and feeling, but there is something added—imagination and thought, restless and penetrative, catching the dissonances of human life; visualizing reason dethroned, justice perverted; and striking in the recognition scene a wonderfully mellow and quieting note.

Shakespeare in *King Lear* has achieved *an organic*

unity, a fusion of the particular and the universal, and the giving a profound significance to characters and incidents. These three things correspond to the three chief points in Hegel's conception of beauty.

The idea of *organic unity* has a peculiar fascination for Hegel. A mere aggregate does not please him, for a thing whose nature is indifferent to the taking away or slapping on of parts interests him but little. He must have what would collapse under such conditions; the thing whose parts share in a common life: the organism. Wherever nature fashions such an organism she comes nearest beauty. Not that Hegel fails to see the inferior beauties of mere aggregates: "In this respect abstract purity in form, color, tone, etc., is at this point the essential thing. Clean-drawn lines, running along uniformly and not with wavering indecision, smooth surfaces, etc., are satisfying because of their firm decisiveness and uniform self-agreement. The purity of the sky, the clearness of the atmosphere, a mirror-like lake or a smooth sea are pleasing for this reason. The same is true of purity of tones." But all the emphasis of his thought is on the beauty of organic unity. Of all natural forms he holds the human body to be most beautiful because it shows such a wonderful and subtle inter-relation of parts. Cut a hand off—the whole body suffers, and the hand decays. Where-

ever there is in nature a lack of such unity, as in mixed animal forms like the crocodile or combinations of bird and reptile, ugliness results. In art organic unity is quite as important an element of beauty.

There is a philosopher's bias in all this, for while to him the notion of organic unity is a necessary tool whose use is intellectually stimulating, there is no valid reason for putting the natural beauty of organic bodies at so high a notch or for seeing in organic unity the highest principle of the beauty of art. Of all the arts sculpture deals most directly with self-complete, organic material—man and animals; its technique is bound to the strictest economy and interrelationship of parts. But it seems to lose rather than gain through this; and is perhaps the poorest of the arts in point of resources. What of Rodin? might be asked. Rodin makes much of the principle of organic unity: his figures and groups are compact; his technique is a very accurate and very complex working out of the mutual bearings of posture, bone, tendon, and muscle. But after all, the real principle of unity with him is some symbolic idea—thought, lust, work, love, self-reproach; an idea of which the body, whether self-absorbed or struggling or limp, is the living and detailed expression. Rodin chooses ideas that are primitive and as limitless in sweep as a ray of light; in this way he gets the imaginative equivalent of a stretch of color or a mass of sensuous material, and avoids the danger

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of too bare and too stubborn an emphasis on the principle of organic unity. This seems the only way sculpture has of freshening itself. Modern sculpture must be dramatic, expressive; and must work a natural symbolism closely into the marble; it must make use of ideas that rouse the imagination. The younger French and Belgian sculptors seem to have realized this—witness such subjects as: *Thought*, *The Dream*, *Accident*, *In the Evening of Life*. Better illustrations still are Meunier's *Puddlers at the Furnace*, *Fire-damp*, *The Mower*, and Lambeaux' *The Human Passions*. A like change is found in the other arts. Outline and composition are not felt to be all important in painting, for here too studied or too elaborate a relation of part to part and of parts to the whole seems to detract from the æsthetic value. We demand something else, and employ either the principle of separate blotches of color or that of *atmosphere*—something that softens and dissolves. The change appears strongly in Whistler's painting and Debussy's music. The modern drama has freed itself from abject slavery to the notion of organic unity in plot and character. A play like Maeterlinck's *The Death of Tintagiles* is simply a mood—a study in delicate greys and sombre blacks; structure in the old, conventional sense is given up for the sake of a veiled and intimate beauty. Playwrights like Strindberg, Brieux, and Galsworthy make the same sacrifice for other reasons; under the stress of

reflection and moral ideas they regard a play as a bit of life, a fragment of meshwork, cut into at random and left with a thousand loose ends. The dramatic treatment of character shows as radical a change. To us with our notions of heredity, of layers of character development, of outflows and inflows of social currents, there seems something false and artificial in the idea of characters as complete and self-closed as billiard balls spinning about and banging against each other. Rather do we conceive of character as the point of an angle whose sides straddle the universe.

Such criticism of Hegel may easily be pushed too far. After all, the two other demands he makes of beauty go far towards correcting the excess of his emphasis on organic unity.

Beauty is somehow a *fusion of the universal and the particular*. There is no disputing the fact; art does give what is at once the individual and the type. Shakespeare does it in all his plays, but most strikingly in *Hamlet*; Thackeray individualizes so important and so slight a thing as an English butler; Flaubert does it with the most trivial objects; Dickens often fails; Arnold Bennett succeeds in his *Old Wives' Tale*. But how explain this secret of the artist; this way he has of taking anything, from a rag doll to a cab horse or a hitching post, and having it stand out as something absolutely apart, itself only, and yet mark-

ing it with the full meaning of its class? Is it a very painstaking observation; or is it a trick of the imagination? Maupassant touches on this problem in the preface to *Pierre et Jean*. With Hegel it widens out into the question: How comes it that some particular incident, some ordinary, everyday character, when interpreted by the artist, strikes us with the sharp thrust and full meaning of the universal? He offers no solution other than putting the whole weight of his philosophical system back of it. Others have different ways of failing; and the problem remains unsolved. But the fact itself of the fusion of particular and universal is one of great æsthetic interest; it underlies the artist's practice and appears largely in his reflection. Rodin's discussion of Millet's *Gleaners* is one example out of many. Here as well as in Rodin's references to portrait painting there is a strange likeness between his views and Hegel's—further proof that Hegel's imagination is artistic in type, at least in its deeper motives.

Hegel applies his theory that beauty is a blend of the particular and universal; and one of the most striking uses he makes of it is in his interpretation of Dutch genre painting. In subject these pictures seem trivial or repellent. There are fat burghers smoking their pipes; boors gambling and quarrelling over their drink; inn-yards and barn-yards with the children as dirty and contented as the pigs and dogs. But there are also spotless kitchen scenes, glimpses of

the council chamber, bits of road, soil, dike and sea. Hegel urges us to turn from the subject of these pictures to their spirit. We are to see in them a life of broad animal enjoyment, of naïve delight in solidity and comfort—lousy comfort at times—a spirit of enterprise, a hard-earned freedom, civic pride as well as pride in neat housewifery, an expansive spirit of achievement and pleasure. This is the universal element in Dutch art. Such an interpretation may easily become fanciful. Hegel neglects the purely technical redemption of a trivial or “low” subject. The color possibilities in the mottled face and arms of a washerwoman may attract a painter; while he may have no thought of the symbolism of grinding toil.

⟨ A work of art must be *concretely significant*. This is Hegel’s third test of beauty. Somehow art makes life seem larger and more significant. In a spirit of creative abundance, it gives a concrete ideality of treatment and a tingling sense of larger issues. Whenever art reveals in this manner life in its reaches and meanings, it has achieved beauty. Hegel’s formula, concrete significance of life, is not narrow or bigoted. On principle it would admit almost any subject and a great variety of interpretations. No aspect of life is either too humble and ugly or too frivolous or too depraved to serve as material for the truly great artist. In this sense

Millet, Meunier, Rodin, Rops, Gorky, Maupassant, Baudelaire, and Verlaine are great artists: they have given the concrete significance of neglected phases of life. Rodin, quite in the spirit of Hegel's discussion of Dutch art, points to the broadly human side of Millet's *Gleaners* as a test. It is easy to understand the danger of straining this principle, and to sympathize with the artist when he demands a purely technical discussion of points. Why not refer to de Hooch's excellent treatment of interiors and of sunlight, Goya's color, Rops's handling of line, Flaubert's relentless analysis of character, Maupassant's clear-cut descriptive power, and Verlaine's simple and haunting verse? Why bring in a general and indefinite standard of excellence? And yet when artist and art critic are pushed they may be made to admit that the interpretative handling of his material is one of the tests legitimately applied to the artist. After all, technique is only a means by which the artist conveys what he feels to be the concrete significance, or the expressive capacities of his subject. One might wish there had been more of the technical discussion of points in Hegel, but that is no reason for rejecting in bulk what turns out to have a very interesting bearing on two troublesome things: imitation and idealization.

No one could insist more strongly than Hegel did on imitation in the sense of observing closely and

impartially and giving results. Thought to him is not something arbitrary; it is fitting oneself sympathetically to the rational structure and movement of reality, a process by which thought and its object both become enriched. Art sets in at one stage of this enriching process, and is fitting oneself sympathetically to whatever of *Geist*, or Spirit, presents itself in sensuous form. In this sense art is an objective imitation of what it chooses to portray or fashion. But the imitation is selective. If life is interpreted as a self-expressing movement, a self-realizing process of spirit, then concrete significance must ultimately mean catching the spiritual import of any group of facts at its richest, and catching also something of the outlook and onrush toward the next phase of the process. Spirit is not completely and adequately expressed in nature; art steps in and clears it of such imperfections, seizes on the essential, and thus liberates the soul of appearances. This is what idealization means to Hegel. To idealize is not to falsify. The ideal tree is not a vague something that is neither oak nor elm nor birch nor maple. To get the bare essentials of treehood,—whose nature only a Platonist would attempt to define,—is unprofitable from the point of view of art. With such a reduction to a general type Hegel has no sympathy, for the drive of his thought is aimed at *concrete* and not abstract, significance. Compare an oak with a birch and you will discover,

in addition to peculiarities of size, of leaf and bark formation, certain expressive lines which seem to give the character and the very life of the oak or the birch. And to say of a particular oak, "That oak has character," does not simply mean that there is something decisive and striking about it; what it really means is that this oak is individual and at the same time expressive of all that is characteristic of oak formation. Among other things this tree gives very sharply the vigor and ruggedness of oaks. Inessential things must be cleared away if this idea is to be expressed forcibly in your painting of the oak. The problem here runs back into that of the fusion of individual and universal. How can we bring out the essential class characteristics of an oak and yet make our oak absolutely individual? To which the only answer is: "It may be impossible, but it is done." Rodin, for instance, does it. He imitates in the Hegelian sense; he is very accurate and sympathetic in his study of his material, individualizes his figures utterly, but universalizes them as well by having some symbolic idea spring naturally from the plastic surface-play of their bodies. An artist may paint with a hungry eye to a particular cloud, but his art is the gainer if he can somehow give something of the elasticity and fleetingness of clouds.

Idealization then for Hegel is imitation rightly stressed and selective for the purpose of bringing

out the inner life and the concrete significance of an object. His own illustration is illuminating. A portrait painter must not be a slavish imitator of nature; he must omit much that he sees—slight discolorations and blemishes of the skin. His portrait contains more than is to be found in the face of the sitter at any given time, his aim being to liberate the spiritual import of the face, which is never given completely at any single moment in life, hence the deadness of so many photographs. He brushes aside the surface facts that cloud it; he goes straight to the heart of the essential.*

Rodin, who champions a theory of the significant not unlike that of Hegel, argues similarly on this

* "Even the portrait painter, who has least to do with the ideal in art, must flatter his subject by omitting all externalities in figure and expression, in form, color, and features; he omits the merely natural of scant existence: the little hairs, pores, scars, blotches on the skin. He must interpret his subject in his universal character and in his permanent spiritual cast. There is all the difference in the world between copying a face as it is on the surface, getting its quiet external form, and representing the features in their truth and in their expression of the man's very soul. It is essential to the Ideal that the external form correspond to the soul. So-called living pictures, quite recently come in vogue, imitate very nicely and pleasantly noted works of art. They seem to catch the decorative effect, the draping, etc., but they often jar because commonplace faces spoil the spiritual expression of the figures imitated. Raphael's madonnas, on the other hand, give us forms of the countenance, of cheeks, eyes, nose, and mouth which in and of themselves express perfectly a mother's love in its blessedness, joyousness, devoutness, and humility."

point. He refers to Houdon's busts, especially to his inimitable bust of Voltaire, and shows how Houdon has seized upon the very essence of his man, and how in busts like those of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Benjamin Franklin, race, class, and individuality stand out. The art is so grippingly effective simply because Houdon has idealized rightly, has liberated the soul of appearances. It is surprising to find so close an agreement between the casual thought of a great creative artist like Rodin and the carefully and intricately planned theories of Hegel.

Organic unity, individuality, and concrete significance then go to make up the beautiful in art. But the idea of development is too securely built into Hegel's philosophy to allow him to stop here, for art to him is a self-expressive movement growing ever richer in meaning, ever more subtle and self-masterful, and ever more resourceful in technique. That there is a difference in significance in different works of art might at once be admitted. One need only compare any work of Greek sculpture with Michael Angelo's *Captive Slave*, or the *Hippolytus* of Euripides with Racine's *Phèdre*. Such differences Hegel interprets not psychologically as many would have done, but culturally. The art of any period gives the spirit and the culture of that period; consider it cut loose from these, and it becomes unintelligible. Greek tragedy cannot be understood apart from certain

religious beliefs and forms of worship; Oriental art has its roots in Oriental religion; only the man who understands the mediæval mind can catch the spirit of mediæval art. This seems an attractive way of looking at art, and one that lends itself to interesting developments, such as the historical method of Taine. But it has its weaknesses: forced readings and an intolerance of revivals such as the mediævalism of the German Romanticists, the art of the Pre-Raphaelites, the mermaids and centaurs of a Boecklin or a Stuck, and the Assyrian and Egyptian element in recent German sculpture. Hegel avoids some of the dangers by using the theory of cultural development in rather a large and general way. He exploits it dramatically by fastening on three phases or stages of such development: the *symbolic*, the *classical*, and the *romantic*.

The *symbolic* period, or phase of art, sounds very formidable in Hegelian language:

“Indefinite, the Idea still lacks the individuality of true beauty; abstract and onesided, it causes the form to be inadequate and arbitrary. This first phase of art is, therefore, merely a groping for a true pictorial representation; the Idea has not yet found its true form and is struggling to find it. This may be called the symbolic art form. In it the Idea has its form in the natural, sensuous material; from this material its fashioning springs, and to it it is bound. Natural objects are either left as they are, the Idea being put into them as their meaning and

their natural interpretation. . . . or consciousness may be struck by the lack of correspondence between natural object and Idea. When the Idea, incapable of expressing itself in any other reality, pours itself forth into these forms, seeks itself in them restlessly and recklessly, and still finds them inadequate, it magnifies such natural forms and appearances to the very top of the excessive and the vague; it reels around in them, brews and seethes in them, forces and distorts them, and seeks to lift the natural to the ideal by distraction, by immensity and a lavish splendor of forms. At this stage the Idea is still vague and formless, the natural objects, clear-formed and defined."

Again:

"First the symbolic: Here the Idea is still seeking its true artistic expression because it is still abstract and indefinite, and lacks an appropriate external manifestation. It finds itself over against the external facts of nature and human existence. In this materiality the Idea suspects its own abstractions. Or it forces a concrete existence on its own vague generalities. As a result it spoils and falsifies the forms it seizes upon arbitrarily; and there is instead of a full accord of meaning with form the mere suggestion of an external correspondence. Both meaning and form reveal in this not completed and not to be completed fusion their mutual externality and inappropriateness."

All this amounts to saying that art at a certain stage lacks both a well-defined, richly organized meaning and an effective technique. The artistic con-

sciousness is vague, not sure of its purpose, poor in resources, blind; in its search for self-expression it hits upon unpromising material and an unhappy technique. The artist has not yet seized natural expressiveness to the full; he takes simple forms, and, unable to observe sharply and exhaustively their nature, hangs on them like a tag some arbitrary symbol. Or his imagination, clumsy and formless, goes at its material with a rush, sets to work to fashion it knows not what, batters and twists its shapes with a confused and reckless extravagance. Such an arbitrary symbolism and such a headlong, ill controlled imagination, Hegel finds in Oriental mythology and Oriental art. The pyramids, obelisks, and early forms of architecture reflect an art spirit still bound to an unresponsive material and still poor in meaning. Chinese idols, much of Hindoo poetry, the pagoda, of crude splendor and extravagant jointings and carvings, reflect the fantastic, ecstatic, riotous spirit of symbolic art.

✓ The second phase of art is the *classical*. In it Spirit has lost its early confused vagueness, shaken itself free of its earlier extravagance; and with a new poise and a new control over a responsive material sets to work to express the spirituality of the purely human. The artistic idea is limited in range, but is clear as crystal; and the beauty achieved is perfect within the narrow limits set. Hegel contrasts the crude animal worship, the fantastic rites, the formless

theogonies of primitive Greek religion with the clean-cut images of the gods and goddesses of Olympus. These Olympians and their lofty, serene spirit of humanity Greek sculpture has made immortal, giving in a perfect and infinitely individualized form their free and individual life. Greek sculptures of the best type are never expressionless; but so closely is the expression worked into the marble, so completely fused with the form, that it often escapes the casual glance; so complete is the spiritual mastery over the material that the marble seems to throb with life, and the face to light up with a serene joyousness that knows neither passion nor sorrow.

The third period, or phase of art, is the *romantic*. The classical ideal, perfect as it is, must give way before the push and drive of the Spirit. As life becomes more complex, more concrete, more significant, the art consciousness becomes fraught with aspirations, inner tensions, and new meanings, and can no longer find itself or exhaust itself in the natural. In its struggle for a larger, more intense and more spiritual self-expression and self-embodiment it shatters the form which for a time satisfied it so completely. Form is rent asunder; it could no longer harbor the eager and self-tormented spirit that entered it. A note of tragedy and struggle breaks in on the self-complacency of the Greek world. Sculpture is replaced by music and poetry, the typically romantic arts, and they in turn reflect the complex inwardness,

the intense conflicts, and the spiritual reach of modern life. There is a blend of melancholy and hopeful vigor in this thought, for a wealth of meaning makes up for whatever sacrifice of formal beauty there is.

These three phases, *symbolic, classical, romantic*, are then traced in the development of each of the several arts. Thus architecture is symbolic in pyramid and pagoda, classical in the Greek temple, and romantic in the Gothic cathedral. Or applying Hegel's two principles of all development, an inner wealth and an effective expression in responsive material, the arts might be ranked as follows: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry. Running along this line, the material becomes more responsive: marble and bronze give way to pigment, and that in turn yields to the expressive medium of language. Parallel with this is an inner development in terms of wealth, concreteness, ideality. Architecture expressed a craving for regularity and symmetry, for an artistic fashioning of the outer world in some of its more immediate and simpler forms. Sculpture gives the freedom, the individuality, and the surface spirituality of the human body. Painting reveals the soul through the eye and the features, and by complex grouping. Music gives, not separate objects, but the flow and current of the innermost self in its ideality. Its realm is the feelings and "all shades of joy, merriment, fun, caprice, of

ecstatic and joyous outbursts of soul; all gradations of fear, anxiety, sorrow, lamentation, grief, pain, yearning, etc., and lastly awe, adoration, love etc.—these make up the domain of musical expression.” It is this that accounts for the power of music: it addresses itself directly to feeling. Hegel, of course, admits a mathematical, structural side to music; but this tone structure of intervals, of contrasts and transitions in movement, this web and woof of rhythm, is to him significant only in so far as it reflects the movements and transitions of feeling. It is by reason of this elemental inwardness that music is the romantic art *par excellence*, and one of the freest of the arts. It shares with poetry the distinction of being the spokesman of the modern spirit. Of these two arts of the inner realm Hegel was by gift and training much more fitted to appreciate and discuss poetry than music; and this has at least something to do with his judgment that poetry is the completest of the arts, and with the sketchiness of his theory of music.

Of poetry the highest form is tragedy. Nowhere in his æsthetics is Hegel’s thought richer and more resourceful than in his theory of dramatic poetry. In the epic there is the broad and naïve portrayal of some early social activity—war, hunting, seafaring, common work—and certain largely sketched

simple characters who *are* the life that surrounds them. In the lyric there is the cry of the subjective—a mood, a feeling or an emotion. The drama gives the fusion of the objective and the subjective: it shows characters that are conscious of their purposes and aims; it shows their wills struggling with other wills and expressing themselves in a world of action full of opposition and reversals of fortune. Conflict is the heart of the drama; and conflict of an especially profound type, the heart of tragedy. None of the ordinary interpretations of the tragic satisfy Hegel. It is not a disastrous struggle with Fate, nor is it the brute cosmic sport hinted at by Gloster:

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

It is a necessary and not at all depressing complication in the adventurous life of the Spirit: a life which works itself out dramatically and surely in us and in all nature other than us. Given reality as a self-expressive and self-expansive principle, growing ever more definite, masterful, self-masterful, and rich: and tragedy follows as a matter of course. Spirit, or *Geist* expresses itself objectively in institutions such as the family and the state and in the various spheres of man's social life; subjectively in character. Here lies the promise of all manner of tragic collisions. As life becomes more complex it seems arrayed

against itself, for its various activities and interests tend to clash. Each of these, right in its own sphere, invades that of the others, and asks the whole allegiance of the individual; and him this two-edged claim destroys. Loyalty to the state calls Antigone, but so does family piety; between the two her life is shattered. As character becomes more complex and more self-assertive another set of collisions appears. For Spirit is embodied in individuals in a very partial and onesided way; and because of this large admixture of unreason life seems in danger of becoming a playground of caprice. Macbeth's ambition threatens to overwhelm the social and moral order; unreason is at work in Lear's anger, Othello's chaotic passion, and Hamlet's indecision. Hegel is clear-sighted enough to see that the conflict need not always be a social one, although the man who rebels against society and its practices and ideals is a favorite tragic figure. There may be a revolt against reason in oneself. But in either case the guilt and the danger are felt to lie in a onesidedness which is like a blow struck at the universal. The wrecking of the Spirit seems imminent as the tragic hero, magnificent in his mixture of noble and base, good and bad, hastens along his impetuous career. The collision stands revealed: naked, sinister, harrowing. The universal hits back and asserts itself at the cost even of the utter destruction of the individual. The

hero is crushed, but in his defeat he feels something of the majesty and spirituality of the force that crushes him; his life passes by him like the muffled sounds of a riot. There lies the purification of an *Œdipus* or an *Othello*. But what of him who sees the play? Is he purified too? Hegel is at once too wary and too profound to saddle tragedy with any moral lessons. He refuses to take the Aristotelian theory of purification through pity and fear in either a moralistic or purely medicinal sense. To him the pity which tragedy arouses in the spectator is not a sentimental sorrowing for the individual as such; it is a sympathetic response to the nobly human, a chastened and saddening feeling that not all that is precious has been saved; fear is not for one's skin or for that matter fear for any one's skin; it is "awe, the invigorating revelation of spiritual power and of its eternal and inviolable majesty and rationality."

There is something attractive about the large way in which Hegel interprets the tragic. While this somewhat *bourgeois*, elderly German confesses that he would rather see a *Schauspiel*, a serious play with a happy ending, than sup his fill of blood and horrors, his thought goes far beyond his likes and dislikes. Both the Artist and the Thinker in him are greater than the man. He understands quite well that the spiritual significance of life differs in different ages; he discriminates finely between the

classical drama of the Greeks and Shakespeare. Much of modern tragedy would lend itself to his theories. That *Ghosts* is not sordid and depressing it owes to its outlook on the problem of heredity and to its conception of life as a self-cleansing process, which, at bottom sound, discards the tainted individual or the tainted generation slowly and pitilessly. In Tolstoy's *Power of Darkness*, Masefield's *Tragedy of Nan*, Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell*, and Maeterlinck's *Mary of Magdala* there is a constructive cosmic faith, although in each of them a different one. But there is none in Maeterlinck's *Death of Tintagiles* or in Strindberg's *The Father*, and yet they are tragic in the truest sense. Might there not be tragedy in an irrational world? Hegel, in spite of the largeness of his view, seems to have excluded one of the most interesting uses of the tragic.

Every one of Hegel's æsthetic theories is backed by his system. But what is back of the system? A Thinker? Yes, but also an Artist. The two cannot be separated. The artistic in Hegel's philosophy does not lie in the details or the style, although there is occasionally plenty of warmth and color in the latter; rather does it lie in the conception of his system. He is an artist largely by force of his imagination, and this in turn shows itself as a *synthetic sense of structure*, as a *sense of the dra-*

matic possibilities of logic, and as a *sense of divine adventure*.

Hegel's sense of structure is quite as fine as Rodin's. In spite of its bold symbolism Rodin's sculpture emphasizes structure; it fits itself closely to the anatomical expressiveness of bodies, partly from instinct and partly from study. Thought is to Hegel a sympathetic fitting oneself to the structure of things, and as such it is to be thorough and impartial. Hegel's theory of the detailed and subtle anatomy of the state and his theory of art show this interpretation of thought. I may be forgiven the qualifying term *synthetic* if I plead the necessity of marking off the artist's sense of structure from the scientist's. Rodin's and Hegel's is synthetic. Not only does Rodin grasp the structural relations of his figures and groups and thus give the impression of unity, but he has some symbolic idea spring naturally from his subject, giving it in this way a world-meaning in terms of struggle, force, passion or any one of many like things. Hegel puts a constant emphasis on the idea of organic unity; one sees his imagination on the track of a unity, a life common to the parts, whose sundered nature it has grasped. Not only that, but each one of these lesser unities is given a world-meaning—though quite unlike Rodin's—; by as elaborate a system of intellectual cranes and pulleys as man ever devised it is swung into place in the Hegelian edifice of relations and meanings.

None but an artist with an imagination of high rank could discover any dramatic possibilities in logic. Instead of an inventory of forms of thought, Hegel gives a drama of complications, transitions, changes to the opposite. One feels thought defining itself, opposing itself, fulfilling itself. The terms are abstract, the jargon disconcerting, but back of these is a true sense of the restless nature of thought and its tensional, everchanging character. Call him a juggler and an acrobatic thinker if you like, but don't overlook the art that seizes upon the dramatic in thought and exploits it as only a genius could have exploited it.

What of Hegel's sense of divine adventure? That beyond all else marks the Artist in Hegel. A sense of the divine there is in many artists; and it appears in many forms. It may be the sense of a crushing fate, as in the early puppet plays of Maeterlinck, or his later confident way of combining mysticism with a scientific faith in an exploration, step by step, of the circle of mystery which envelops like a band of darkness our system of experience as well as our most casual experiences; it may be the eyes of the Christ-child of the *Sistine Madonna* or the music of *Parsifal*; it may be a bit of color in a picture or a curtain withdrawn in a lyric and a glimpse of an infinite. Many poets, sculptors, and painters have a sense of the divine; few have what Hegel had, a sense of divine adventure. Browning had it; so

{ had Walt Whitman. Hegel gives a world-drama, in which the divine is at once the sufferer, the actor, and the scene. You are asked to catch the venturesomeness of a World Spirit who is the grime and dust of battle as well as the victory, who casts himself off in order to regain himself after a struggle. There is not in Hegel the boyish delight in thought-adventure that there is in James; he lacks the extravagance of the mediævalism of the Romanticists; he is without the picturesqueness of a Nietzsche; his thought is orderly in all its transformations. Beneath his language, which is like stiffened draperies, his thought moves with astonishing enterprise and nimbleness. One need only contrast him with Maeterlinck to catch this dramatic quality. There are in Maeterlinck's essays two passages in which he very strikingly visualizes the mysterious and our exploring it. In one of these he suggests a group of buildings such as you might find at a fair or in an amusement park. Seen from a distance at night they are meant to be nothing but thin lines of light against the darkness. Imagine these electric lights to be switched on in sets, and imagine delay somewhere: there will be gaps; the outlines will be incomplete until the missing threads of light appear. In our world-outline there are just such gaps; they are the mysteries of life; some day, however, with the advance of science light will leap from point to point and the world will be revealed in its complete, luminous reasonable-

ness. In the other passage Maeterlinck uses the image of a man who leaves his house to explore what is outside and who finds, not a wilderness, but gardens and fruitful plains in which he may wander, touching stealthily and lovingly a flower, a blade of grass or an ear of corn. Both similes are undramatic. The world-meaning is there, complete: you are to discover it; you are there to discover it. There is no hint of the bitterness of the struggle, no suggestion that you are not yet you or that the world-meaning itself is in the making. But there is all this in Hegel. The world to him is a divine adventure, and he has imagined with the insight of a dramatic poet the complications, the surprises, the intensity, and the variety of this adventure.

VI

TOLSTOY

*Why, where but in the sense and soul of
me, Art's judge?* —BROWNING.

IN 1880 Turgenieff on a visit to Yasnaya Polyana found Tolstoy much changed: feverishly at work making himself over, pondering God and the universe. With this plunge into self-analysis and mysticism he had little sympathy; he referred to it with indulgent cynicism in a letter to a friend: "Every one kills his fleas in his own way." He feared a loss to Russian literature; few appreciated as he did Tolstoy's art, fine in its characterization, healthy in its animalism, and of an epic breadth. Was this "great writer of our Russian land" to turn ascetic and moralist? Three years later Turgenieff sent from what proved to be his death-bed an appeal to Tolstoy not to forsake literature.

The appeal went unheeded. Tolstoy uncere-
moniously bowed himself off the stage of art and
definitely became a critic of life and a social reformer.
Never afterward did his work escape the cramping
coils of moral purpose. He wrote simple stories for

the peasants, philosophical essays, pamphlets and manifestoes on questions of the day: all of them very sincere; some of them very true; none of them from an artistic point of view worthy of his earlier work. Even when he turns to the novel, as he did in *Resurrection*, good material is washed bare of artistic possibilities by too strong a moral corrosive.

There are many who deplore this change—this bending to the moral yoke—and look with a great deal of distrust on the great crisis in Tolstoy's life. Conversion, they hold, may possibly be good for the man, but assuredly is fatal to the artist. A distorted view of life, they say, has reacted unfavorably on Tolstoy's art and view of art. It is easy to see some grounds for such criticism; if a theory is no stronger than its weakest dictum or application, little can be said in favor of Tolstoy's political, moral, and æsthetic theories; and least of all can be said in favor of his views on art. What can be held of a man who regards *King Lear* as a mere clutter of improbabilities and denies Shakespeare grasp, sense of measure, and true characterization; of one who rejects Dante and Michael Angelo nonchalantly, and shows as little understanding of the trenchant intellectualism of Ibsen as he does of the elusive art of Maeterlinck or Baudelaire and the rich art of Boecklin, Beethoven, and Wagner? These erratic views are expressed in two essays: *What is Art?* published in 1898, and *Shakespeare*,

in 1906. They cannot be set to the score of old age, for nothing could be more virile than Tolstoy at eighty; besides, letters, diaries, reminiscences prove that many of them extend back to ripe manhood. For years Tolstoy tried to force Shakespeare on himself, always without success. "I invariably underwent the same feelings: repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment." It would be quite as unfair to set aside because of them Tolstoy's whole theory of art, and to ask: Why consider a blind man's theory of color? To deny that a great artist like Tolstoy has some understanding at least of the essentials of beauty, is too much like going at things with a scoop. Limited in range his feeling for art certainly is, for he could not enjoy verse and its music, and so misjudged the Symbolists utterly. When he tests King Lear by means of retelling the plot in the baldest possible prose, he overlooks the meaning of poetic pitch of character and incident. Highly complex forms of art he could not appreciate, but within this range and its racial, personal and cultural limits his appreciation of art is genuine and in the main convincing and sound; and what is true of his art holds also of his judgment of art: it is truest when nearest the soil. That is why he has such a fine feeling for Homer and for the rich, earthy art of folk-song and folk-epic. Nor is it safe to regard the crisis for which *My Confession* stands as a sudden wrenching free which ever after

left a moral twist. Some influence must be admitted; some warping of judgment and some estrangement from the artistic as such. But, after all, Tolstoy's art, at its earliest and even at its best, has a moral strain to it. The problem of the reshaping of character is not peculiar to *Resurrection*; it appears in *Anna Karenina* and still earlier in terse and virile form in *The Cossacks*; the question of the meaning of life, which Tolstoy came to use as the test of art, haunts Besuchoff in *War and Peace* and Levin in *Anna Karenina*, and figures prominently as far back as 1852 in the unfinished novel *Youth*. In view of this it is absurd to say that Tolstoy's attitude toward art at some definite time came within the deep shadow of a moral eclipse.

The truth of the matter seems to be this: Back of Tolstoy's art criticisms is a definite and thoughtful theory of art and its relation to life, a theory worked out gradually and unevenly. Erratic as it is, it is much stronger than its weakest link. True or false, it is at least vital; partly because it is himself—his personality caught in one of its sincerest expressive movements—and reflects the directness, massiveness, and liveness of his interests; partly because it comes from a creative genius; partly because it is a cultural theory of art: a peculiarly earnest attempt to connect art with life and to see the values of art in relation to whatever else of value a

fixed will and a hungry imagination can snatch from life. It is therefore entitled to a hearing.

Tolstoy's essay on Guy de Maupassant, written in 1894, gives interesting matter. We are told that in 1881 Turgenieff brought him the *Maison Tellier* collection of stories. It was an ill-chosen moment: "That particular period, the year 1881, was for me the fiercest time of the inner reconstruction of my whole understanding of life, and in this reconstruction those employments called the Fine Arts, to which I had formerly given all my power, had not only lost all their former importance in my eyes, but had become altogether obnoxious to me owing to the unnatural position they had hitherto occupied in my life, and which they generally occupy in the estimation of people of the wealthy classes." Maupassant did not escape this general disfavor. His workmanship was admired, but much of his material found repellent, and his attitude towards life, ill-defined. Later when he came back to Maupassant and read *Une Vie* his estimate changed. Here he saw what he had thought lacking and what he was fast coming to regard as the essential of good art. The essay reflects this juster estimate, and in it are to be found Tolstoy's four tests of good art.

The first of these four art tests is *genius*, that is, "the faculty of intense, strenuous attention, applied according to the author's tastes to this or that

subject; and by means of which the possessor of this capacity sees the things to which he applies his attention in some new aspect overlooked by others." There must, in short, be a close and fresh view of things. Again, there must be *beauty of expression*. The third quality demanded is *sincerity*: an earnestness burnt into its material. The fourth is "*a correct, that is, moral relation of the author to his subject.*" All these he finds in most of Maupassant's work.

These four tests, with the emphasis thrown sharply on the fourth, give the key to Tolstoy's theory of art, but only if they are understood in their psychological sources and in the drift of their logic. With the first three this is a simple matter, for it is not difficult to understand and to justify genius, sincerity, and clearness and beauty of expression as tests of good art. Nor is the problem of source difficult: they reflect much in Tolstoy's character and are in turn reflected in his art. Nothing could be more earnest, surer in touch and bolder in design than some of his character studies; in his descriptions no detail is too minute for a sharp, searching, vitalizing imagination. The snowstorm in *Master and Servant* is wonderfully true; so are the descriptions of dumb animals, the battle canvases and gambling scenes in *War and Peace*. Nothing escapes him: he is equally at home in the hot life of the steppes and in the jaded life of the salon. He catches with

photographic accuracy the homely doings of peasant life and the unobtrusive panorama of nature—soil, wind, and weather. As for the source from which these three demands spring, it is to be found in the quality of directness which marks Tolstoy the man above all else. The desire to live earnestly and to see clearly was with him almost an obsession; so downright and energetic is he in his search that he often fails to judge cautiously and sanely; revealing a most perplexing blend of idealist and straight, none too subtle, common-sense thinker; and yet this directness in its good variants marks what is best in his art, in shaping his studies of peasant character, for instance.

The fourth art test is, however, the one most heavily staked. An author is to have "a correct, that is, moral relation" to his subject. Two questions immediately shake themselves free: What is meant by a right, or moral relation? What is considered a right, or moral relation?

As to the first question, one set of clues is given by the essay itself. Maupassant's short stories are praised because they bring out so sharply the awful disillusionment of animal love. This might suggest moralizing and a "wages of sin" idea. Nothing is more congenial to the Anglo-Saxon and more distasteful to the Frenchman. It would be idle to deny that Tolstoy often moralizes in just this way, in his later short stories especially. It is the peasant's greed or

his shiftlessness and love of vodka that is the distressingly obvious moral lesson of such tales as *How much Land does a Man Require?* and *How the Little Devil Atoned for the Crust of Bread*. But here Tolstoy has something else in mind. "An artist is only an artist because he sees things not as he wishes to see them, but as they are." That is the voice of the great realist who by the mere relentless handling of cause and effect gives the shattering of Anna Karenina's life impressively and objectively with no attempt at moralizing. What Tolstoy means is that art must be rooted in a *Weltanschauung*, a life attitude, and that this, and not character or plot, is the true principle of unity in a novel or a play. Life is thought to have an inherent moral quality; this the true artist is to give intensely and objectively. If he takes life piecemeal his art becomes false and insignificant. Just as there is one position from which an object of sense yields itself most fully, so there is one point of view from which life is held to disclose its meaning. So we are to ask the artist: "From what standpoint will you illumine life for me?" Discussing a young Russian writer of great promise, Tolstoy said that while he admired the artistic quality of his work he failed to find in it a definite philosophy of life.

True art then must give a clear, undistorted reflection of life and its meaning. An artist must first of all understand life in all its elemental force and in all

its puzzling reaches. All this might be mere phrase or pose; and there are many with whom philosophy is either or both. Not so with Tolstoy, for with him the problem of life is an urgent, pressing one; it is the very hunger of his existence. He comes back to it again and again; his letters and diaries are full of self-analysis, confessions, self-damnings. Curiously intent on living earnestly and seeing clearly, he jots down his master faults, maps out studies and methods of discipline, launches and questions all manner of thoughts; and all this with little or no trace of the morbid, and in the midst of much riotous living. But life for many years proved too sweet in the living for more than mere foreshadowings of that great spiritual crisis of which *My Confession* gives so intense and sincere an account. No one who fails to see the significance of that crisis can understand the high seriousness of his view of art. Tolstoy was in his forties, in good health, happily married, a successful writer, successful in the experiments in peasant schooling he had tried on his estates, when the craving for a rational view of life caught him full sweep and drove him to the very edge of despair.

“ My life had come to a sudden stop. I was able to breathe, to eat, to drink, to sleep. I could not, indeed, help doing so; but there was no real life in me. I had not a single wish to strive for the fulfilment of what I could feel to be reasonable. If

I wished for anything, I knew beforehand that, were I to satisfy the wish, nothing would come of it; I should still be dissatisfied."

"I knew not what I wanted, I was afraid of life; I shrank from it, and yet there was something I hoped for from it.

"Such was the condition I had come to, at a time when all the conditions of my life were preëminently happy ones, and when I had not reached my fiftieth year . . . Moreover my mind was neither deranged nor weakened; on the contrary, I enjoyed a mental and physical strength which I have seldom found in men of my class and pursuits: I could keep up with a peasant in mowing, and could continue mental labor for ten hours at a stretch without any evil consequences."

All this doubt and this anguish, as of a man starving, crystallize about the question: Is Life "an evil and absurdity"? which is the problem of *My Confession*. Curiously enough it at first takes on a selfish cast. "What am I with all my desires?" Why set mind to purpose or hand to work when the outcome must be decay and death? Tolstoy, to whom by temperament the aspect of death was horrible, had come to feel that the thought of this fleetingness and decay would embitter every joy and cripple every aim. "I, like Sakya Muni, could not drive to the pleasure ground when I knew of the existence of old age, suffering and death." It is the world old cry of anguish in the presence of change and of death,

the great denier. But another question appears in a passage like the following: "Why do I live?—The question was, why should I live, i.e., what of real and imperishable will come of my shadowy and perishable life—what meaning has my finite existence in the infinite universe?" Nothing could be sharper than the contrast between this question and the one originally asked: that was a problem of satisfaction; this is one of service. In the one I ask life to justify itself to me; in the other I ask of myself a justification at the bar of life; in the first I assume that life ought to be sweet to the taste and am routed in the midst of my pleasures by the death's head of change and decay at the banquet; in the second I challenge this assumption and think of life, not as an invitation to enjoy, but as a demand to work. The first problem does not hold Tolstoy, he pushes on to the second. Assume that satisfaction of desires defines the meaning of life, and you are caught in the swirl of unreason, but the unreason is in you, not in life. You have put things wrongly. Is life devoid of reason because it rejects an irrational demand? In this way Tolstoy by shifting the emphasis forces the prospect of a solution of the problem of life. Life seems too large and sane to be cast aside on account of the disappointed pleasure-seeker's despair; thousands seem to find a meaning in it; they seem to live strongly, clearly, happily; their point of view seems vital; their faith, sustaining. Why then not turn to this

simple, strong life of the masses for guidance? This Tolstoy did resolutely.

“I renounced the life of my class, for I had come to confess that it was not a real life, only the semblance of one; that its superfluous luxury prevented the possibility of understanding life, and that in order to do so I must know, not an exceptional parasitic life, but the simple life of the working classes, the life which fashions that of the world, and gives it the meaning which the working classes accept. The simple laboring men around me were the Russian people, and I turned to this people and to the meaning which it gives to life.”

The message Tolstoy gets from the masses is that the only rational life is a life of faith, work, self-denial, humility, kindness, and charity. The meaning of life is found in social service and in an ideal of self-culture built about energetic self-discipline and sincere religious aspiration.

It is from this point of view that Tolstoy studies and condemns modern culture, and develops a cultural theory of art. His criticisms on modern art must be viewed in the light of his attitude toward modern culture. Our culture, to his way of thinking, wrongly assumes enjoyment to be the meaning of life, and exhausts itself in the pursuit of material comfort, in a restless craving for luxury and the sources of pleasure. Pessimism and *mal de vie* are too often

only the expression of pleasure-seeking thwarted or gone wrong. Again, modern culture is exclusive. It is built on the slavery of the masses, and exacts heavy sacrifices in time, labor, and suffering of the many for the benefit of the few. Why, asks Tolstoy, should they that are nearest to life and an understanding of it, they to whom life is not a plaything or a morsel for the senses, but something concrete, earnest, vital, of social purpose—why should they be sacrificed in order to strengthen the pleasure-seeker in his wrong position? Why should there be this deplorable sacrifice of life and character? “But how wonderfully blind we become as soon as the question concerns those millions of workers who perish slowly and often painfully, all around us, at labors the fruits of which we use for our convenience and pleasure!”

Modern art Tolstoy considers no less wasteful and exclusive than modern culture. It is selfish, exclusive, and costly. It exacts the toll of work from the many and yields pleasure and profit to the few. In its complex forms, grand opera, for instance, it is accessible to few, intelligible to fewer still, and costly out of all proportion to its value. There is much crude fun and not a little malice in Tolstoy's description of a grand opera dress rehearsal at St. Petersburg. This wastefulness of modern art is tragic because the drudges of art, the printer, the stagehand, the musician, caught in a deadening routine, get nothing of the glamour of art, and because there is such a

favoring of soft-living artists at the expense of really useful material. The drudge, the artist and the art patron alike miss the true meaning of life: the first because he is a drudge, the others because they are pleasure-seekers. Here lies the root of the evil: art instead of being a cultural force is becoming an instrument of pleasure in the hands of the moneyed and leisured classes. Small wonder then that it revels in a complex technique, loses itself in symbolism and cryptics, and glorifies passions and impulses over which the common man shakes a puzzled head. Ingenuity is gained, for what could be more ingenious than the court pastoral, the sonnet, the ode, the symphony? But it is gained at the expense of force and breadth. At its worst this exclusive art, always within easy reach of the decadent, expresses the abnormalities of a mind out of focus; at its best it reflects shallow class ideals and surface vanities. These class ideals are: sense of honor, or pride, blatant patriotism, and amorousness. They are parasitical developments of life and lack the vigor, freshness, and massive pressure of the elemental. To Tolstoy with his intense hunger of life such ideals seemed vapid. He caught at the life of the peasant—in his work at Yasnaya Polyana, in his talks and comradeships of the open road, in his pilgrimages to Optin monastery; in such a life close to the soil he thought he detected an unmatched strength and intensity, spiritual and artistic. In peasant life he

saw at least the promise of a wisdom that is not mere cleverness, and an art that is not a mere toying with sounds, colors, and feelings.

This line of reasoning might suggest an onslaught on art as such, but that is certainly not Tolstoy's purpose. He is not to be ranked as an enemy of art; he is not a scoffer, but a critic; a critic whose concern for true art gives the sharpest possible edge to his attack on what he considers bad art. To him true art is a cultural force of immense importance, but easily sent astray—made, as in the mass of modern art, to serve a false ideal of life, and selfish, exclusive, costly interests.

What then is true art, art not culturally perverted? "Art is one of two organs of human progress. By words man interchanges thoughts, by the forms of art he interchanges feelings, and this with all men, not only of the present time, but also of the past and the future . . . To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced, and, having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colors, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling—this is the activity of art. Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously by means of certain external signs hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them." Such passages prove that Tolstoy regards

art as self-expression, and essentially transference of feelings. It is here that he gets his test of true art: the excellence of any work of art depends, first, on whether or not it conveys feelings effectively, second, on the worth of the feelings conveyed.

The contagiousness of art in turn depends on three things: the novelty and originality of the feeling, the clearness with which it is expressed, and the sincerity of the author. Good art must be *striking*, *luminous*, and *convincing*. Thus in the technique of the drama Tolstoy demands "a true individuality of language, corresponding to the characters; a natural, and at the same time touching plot; a correct scenic rendering of the demonstration and development of emotion; and the feeling of measure in all that is represented." Of the three essentials of transference of feelings sincerity is the most important. "It is always complied with in peasant art, and this explains why such art always acts so powerfully; but it is a condition almost entirely absent from our upper-class art, which is continually produced by artists actuated by personal aims of covetousness and vanity."

Passing to the second test of good art: how are we to judge of the worth of the feelings conveyed? At any particular stage of social development there is a certain amount of religious perception and feeling. Art draws on this, and good art draws on it most fully. The religious consciousness of any given time

is the judge of the worth of the feelings conveyed—it is this startling assertion that Tolstoy's thought arrives at. But he interprets religious consciousness as “an understanding defining the highest good at which that society aims; it is nothing else than the revealing of a new creative relation of man to the universe.” This earnest and penetrative wisdom is strong in the choice spirits of an age, and at work in the life of the masses. Life is freshened by this source of new, forceful, and communicable feelings, and art is the gainer, for there is “nothing so old and stale as gratification” and “nothing so new as the feelings which flow into the religious consciousness of a given time.” Hebrew and Greek art are cited to point the argument. While false art is continually impoverishing itself, true art draws on the richest possible soil. Tolstoy in this way connects the tests of novelty, clearness, and sincerity with that of worth of content.

Tolstoy is quite aware that religious feeling and perception are different in different ages, and that in order to judge of the worth of present-day art it becomes necessary to get the tone and temper of the present-day religious consciousness. This, Tolstoy holds, is summed up in two things: sonship in God and brotherhood of men. “The religious consciousness of our times, in its widest and most practical application, is the consciousness that our well-being, material and spiritual, temporal and eternal, is included in

the brotherly life of all people, in our living union with each other."

Stripped of all church ceremonial and theology, Christianity is for Tolstoy nothing but a very simple but immeasurably strong combination of the ideas: sonship in God and brotherhood of men. They in turn are the great fresheners and sustainers of what is best in modern art. If art is directly religious, giving what is best in religious perception and giving it simply and convincingly, it is of the very best; if it turns against anti-social feelings, it is on a slightly lower plane; if it expresses certain simple, fundamental feelings, such as gaiety, tenderness, grief, it is still, though indirectly, religious art, for it fosters the sense of human kinship. Tolstoy with an honest avowal of fallibility classes among good art: Millet's *Angelus*, the novels of Dickens, Victor Hugo, Dostoevsky, Mozart, Weber, and part of Chopin and Beethoven—and folk-poetry. His own art he condemns with the exception of two stories: *God Sees the Truth* and *The Caucasian Prisoner*.

Such, for good or ill, is Tolstoy's theory of art. In its results it is beyond a doubt disappointing in a great many ways. Its heresies and gross lapses of insight stand out, but in and of themselves they would not be strong enough to condemn it. The fault lies deeper: it is Tolstoy's onesided, narrow interpretation of culture that spoils his theory of art. Any theory of art as frankly cultural as Tolstoy's is made or

marred by the conception of culture that carries it; a flaw in that counts tenfold against it. Here is where Tolstoy is weakest, for as a social thinker he often lays himself open to the charge of being crude, rash, and narrow; he turns to large problems, looks at them intently, impatiently, but not always largely. One searches in vain for sound judgment of essentials and for a finely discriminative strain of thought: fitful flashes of truth in a Cimmerian darkness, that is all there is, instead of an even, luminous flooding of social problems. He demands that life swing back to simple archaic forms and that art express the strength, the directness, the simplicity of this genuine culture—which amounts to casting aside intellectual achievements and forcing art to move within the confines of peasant thought and peasant feeling. There lies the damning fact, in this stultification of art, in the failure to see that art as well as life is constantly becoming a richer and a more subtle thing, and that with its ever increasing range of expressiveness it must find a place for the subjective, the complex, the elusive, the abnormal. It is all the richer for a Maeterlinck or a Baudelaire. Over against a fresh, simple, strong peasant art Tolstoy sets the danger of pose, affectation, and sickening self-exploitation; he has no eye for other possibilities. Peasant life may be simple and strong, but it is often dull or gross, and popular art often shares this dulness or grossness; Tolstoy himself became the victim of that

dulness when on reading one of the most touching scenes of his *The Power of Darkness*, a play based incident for incident on an actual criminal case among peasants, to a group of peasants, he was greeted with unexpected laughter. Again, artistic *finesse* need not mean a mannered or a sickish art.

But if Tolstoy's theory of art is disappointing in results, it is not disappointing as a problem. All sorts of questions spread from it like a fan. Does the Thinker crowd out the Maker? Can the philosophical impulse develop only at the expense of the artistic? Or if there is war between the two, is it not rather the direction taken by either that is responsible? That in Tolstoy the moral interest seriously endangered his art and his interest in art there can be no doubt. The philosophical tinge to his earlier work deepened to the problem, How ought I to live? What is the meaning of life? Questions like these ought to be an artistic asset; they ought to make art richer, more searching—and they do it in Hardy, in Anatole France, in Gorky. What of *Jude the Obscure* and *The Gods are Athirst*? No one has seen more sharply than Gorky the tragedy of a soul lost in the tumult and social unreason of modern life. His characters, hungry for life and an understanding of it, but crippled, entangle themselves in their own thoughts and purposes or else face life with the dumb agony of an animal at bay. If in Hardy, Anatole France, and Gorky, why not in Tolstoy? Is it because he

puts the problem too reflectively, too self-consciously; because his philosophy is stark naked? Is it perhaps because a solved problem is artistically a dead problem? Or does the flaw lie in the nature of Tolstoy's solution? Are there greater possibilities for art in regarding life as a cruel joke or a senseless jumble than as a purposive, man-centered system? Is it because under Tolstoy's hands the problem shrinks from a cosmic to a moral one, leaving nature outside? Tolstoy was a keen observer of nature, but not a philosophical interpreter of her changes, laws, and moods. Hardy's cruel, blunt analysis and Anatole France's comments, at once sympathetic and caustic, run the problem of man into the problem of nature. Maeterlinck's art owes much to his interest in nature; the individual's life, steeped in mixture of the delicate, the smooth, the fantastic, turns to a richer, more aromatic blend of character and destiny. But Tolstoy destroys what color it has by washing it in moral brine.

There is much meat for argument in all these questions; and there is not a little that is perplexing in Tolstoy the Artist and the Thinker,

VII

NIETZSCHE

*Auf jedem Gleichniss reitest du hier zu
jeder Wahrheit. Hier springen dir alles
Seins Worte und Wort-Schreine auf—*

—THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA.

THERE was a time when Nietzsche was thought of as the spirit of evil, the *Antichrist* who scoffed at the holiest of things, the *Immoralist*. His age disowned him; and the shadow of a great loneliness hung over him. During the last year of his sane life the clouds began to lift: Brandes lectured on him at the University of Copenhagen; letters from young and enthusiastic disciples arrived from Vienna. Then there came a time when every youth whose mind was in a ferment of social revolt saw in him the great Apostle of freedom; when students talked much and wildly of his *Superman*; and his doctrines, often strangely distorted, made their appearance in Italian, Norwegian, and Russian literature. Our interest is shifting considerably. We are, for one thing, in possession of new material: the *Ecce Homo* and the *Letters*; and they tell us much of the physical

< disabilities of this Thinker, of his moods, of his spiritual struggles, of a heart heavy and chilled by the hugeness of his task and a spirit glorying in the contest; they reveal the sensitiveness of the man and his curious self-esteem. Much of this was to be had for the asking in his books. But best of all, they reveal the Artist in this Thinker. By furnishing us with bits of self-analysis, with observations on his style and on the way in which his imagination worked, Nietzsche has given us a new clue to his work. If followed out it will show clearly the æsthetic groundwork of his philosophy; it will reveal an imagination at once imperious and playful at work directing the drive of his thought. Few thinkers can boast of so rich an artistic endowment; none was so utterly mastered by it or so intensely interested in some of its problems.

To get nearer to Nietzsche the artist philosopher one must after a brief reference to some of his literary criticisms and opinions pass to his criticism of Wagner and consider all it implies; turn to his famous contrast of the *Dionysian* and *Apollonian* artist and his analysis of the artistic temperament; and one must then attempt some sort of an interpretation of his style and imagination, and of their influence on his thought.

Nietzsche's literary estimates are numerous. Some

are trivial and superficial, but others carry straight to his beliefs and ideals. Here is a cluster of them, given for what they are worth. Few philosophers find grace in his eyes: Socrates, Kant, Mill, Comte, and Spencer are spoken of with contempt; Carlyle is uncouth, insincere, self-tormented. He has little patience with Ibsen and calls Victor Hugo "the lighthouse on the sea of nonsense." Schiller moralizes and Zola brutalizes; it is easily guessed which to Nietzsche is the deadlier sin. Sainte Beuve is a resentful woman of a man, and Taine has been all but spoiled by Hegel. He appreciates the art of men like Anatole France, Bourget, and Maupassant, and he tells us that Molière, Montaigne, and Corneille have a place in his small collection of favorite books. He prefers Manfred to Faust. He speaks of the "wild and tangled" genius of Shakespeare, but feels the dramatic and emotional intensity of Hamlet and King Lear, and has interpreted the problem of Hamlet in a striking way.* Heine owes his supremacy as a lyrical poet to the "sweet and passionate

* THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY: "In this sense the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: they have both looked deeply and truly into the being of things; they have *understood*, hence the prospect of action nauseates them. They see that nothing in their actions can change one whit the essence of things; they feel the folly and the disgrace of the demand that they should straighten a world out of joint. Knowledge slays action; if we are to act illusion must veil our eye—this is the true meaning of Hamlet, not that cheap story of a Jack o' Dreams who fails to act because he reflects too much on all manner

music " of his language. Of the ancients, Homer, Æschylus, and Pindar stand highest.

Of much greater importance than these scattered criticisms is Nietzsche's relation to Wagner, both critical and personal. The tragedy of their friendship is well known. They first met in 1866; Nietzsche, much the younger of the two, felt himself stimulated. He welcomed Wagner as the very spirit of music and the forerunner of a new culture. In 1869 and 1870 they spent many happy Saturdays and Sundays together at Tribschen, near Lucerne—days of mutual confidences, great thoughts, sincere friendship; sunny "cloudless" days. It was then that Wagner's greatness smote Nietzsche like a life-giving wind; and up sprang those two great and extreme panegyrics, *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*. A few years later this young enthusiast turned sharply away from Wagner, and took issue with his philosophy and his art. His own philosophy was in the making; it found voice in *Human All too Human*. He sent Wagner a copy of that essay at the very time Wagner was sending him *Parsifal*. It was, says Nietzsche, like the crossing of two swords. One thing only could come of it, complete estrange-

of possibilities. No, it is not reflecting that makes action impossible—it is a true understanding of, and insight into the awful truth, it is this that paralyzes every impulse to act, with Hamlet as well as with the Dionysian man."

ment and—silence. Nietzsche became more and more convinced that Wagner's name meant the ruin of music and a decadent culture; his disapproval was sharp but incidental until, in the year 1888, it broke out with unmeasured vehemence in the pamphlets *The Case of Wagner*; *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, and *The Twilight of the Idols*.

There is real tragedy in this breach of a very deep and sincere friendship; the tragedy of a sacrifice to an ideal. In *Ecce Homo*, written just before madness closed in on him, Nietzsche speaks with gratitude and regret of the days at Tribschen; yet his attack is severe and relentless. Back of it is the fanaticism of the idealist, the spiritual convalescent who looks with distrust and disgust on any sign of disease. Nothing could be more cruel than your out-and-out idealist when he turns upon any of his former idolatries and enthusiasms. Nietzsche's devotion to the ideal was intense; earnest to the point of fanaticism, acutely sensitive to suffering in himself and in others, endowed with a strange defensive irritability, he struck hard when his loyalty to an ideal was in question. While he felt the loneliness of his later life keenly—no man had sadder need of friends than he—he did not hesitate to break with his best friends when a community of interests and ideals was no longer possible. One of the volumes of his letters contains his correspondence with Rohde, who was one of his finest and oldest friends. In the eighties

Nietzsche began to feel an indifference, a silent but all the more provoking resistance to his ideal; this *impasse* irritated and depressed him; he flared up and brought the friendship to an abrupt and insulting close. The motives for his break with Paul Rée were somewhat different. But Nietzsche's fanaticism reveals itself most strikingly in an incident whose disturbing influence colors many of the letters of 1882 and 1883. Some of his friends had recommended to him very highly a young Russian woman, Lou Salomé, as a kindred soul, a possible disciple; as one who might help him with some of his work. Hers had been an heroic life of self-sacrifice to truth, to knowledge. Nietzsche, with a philosopher's lack of gallantry, describes her to his sister as a girl who for want of good looks had cultivated her intellect. The heroics appealed to him; but he soon came to regard her as a person without "ideals, aims, and duties". Her freedom of speech and action shocked this great reviser of values, who proved to be a bit old-fashioned after all; and this "*immoralist*" reads a very impressive moral lesson on true heroism and what it means in the way of singlemindedness, devotion to an ideal, and a constant, daily, hourly response to a sense of duty. He sees his own "holy self-love" caricatured in this "kitten's selfishness" of Lou's superficial, affected, insincere mind; and when he sees all this, his resentment knows no bounds. A blow had been struck at his ideal—and Lou

Salomé received as harsh a letter as ever idealist wrote.

There is not this sharp, discordant personal note in the breach of Nietzsche's friendship with Wagner. Long before he came to write against Wagner, the issue had become an impersonal one; he felt he was fighting not an individual, but principles and tendencies. Still there is often a venomous sting to his words; which happens whenever the æsthetic critic yields his place to the fanatic devotee of an ideal he sees endangered.

In the welter of Nietzsche's criticisms of Wagner there are but a few that are purely æsthetic, and they all group themselves about the thought that Wagner lacks style, dramatic and musical. It seems strange that a man the majority of whose books lack all unity except the unity of mood should have insisted so strongly on style as an ordering of parts, and should have denied to Wagner the power to fashion work all of a piece. His criticism here is at its unhappiest; it confuses complexity with anarchy. He overlooks the great advance of the music drama over the opera in structural unity. He gives instances of awkward devices such as the following:

"Assume Wagner to be in need of a female voice. A whole act without a female voice—impossible! But all his heroines are for the time being engaged. What does Wagner do? He emancipates the oldest

woman of the world—Mother Earth. ‘Up, aged grandmother, you must sing!’ Mother Earth sings. Wagner has gained what he wants, so he packs the old lady off. ‘Why did you come, anyway? Off with you, and have the kindness to continue your nap.’”

But he fails to see the singleness of artistic purpose which marks Wagner at his best, and does scant justice to the theory of the relation of poetry to music. Events and words alone, Wagner would have said, cannot possibly give the full, organized meaning of the dramatic idea; they need the services of a new dramatic and implicational music with a restless to and fro, a varying comment, a mutual enhancing of parts. “Infinite melody” is his phrase for it, and on that phrase Nietzsche pounces. To him it suggests the nebulous, the formless, the Hegelian; it is a pretentious stage trick on the part of an idealist to disguise his lack of musical style. Why sacrifice all beauty of form in music for an infinite cloud realm of meaning, a “*Nowhere and Otherwhere*”? Wagner asks us to swim in the sea of “infinite melody”; the older music, light and elegant in its measures, taught us to dance. Nietzsche is very fond of this metaphor of the dance. Language to him is the pipe of Dionysus, light and playful, sad, passionate by turn; it ought to express the rhythmic animation, the intensity, and versatility of the artist. Rhythmic and appropriate expression

of feeling is the essence of style. He sees no sunniness, no lightness in Wagner's music; it is harsh and formless; it lacks deftness. One cannot dance to it or march to it; "not even the young German emperor can march to Wagner's *Kaisermarsch*." It does violence to one's sense of form, and therefore means the very dissolution of style. Intensity there is—Nietzsche never denied the greatness of *Tristan und Isolde* in this respect—but it is a shattering intensity which makes it impossible to breathe freely and respond rhythmically. In a passage in *The Birth of Tragedy* there is an interesting allusion to the third act of *Tristan und Isolde*:

"How should it be possible for a man to escape instant destruction when he has put his ear to the very heart of the World Will, when he has felt a raging lust of being—now a thundering stream, and then a bit of spray—in every vein of the universe. How should he, a mere fragile shell of human individuality, endure the numberless cries of joy and anguish reëchoing in 'the wide space of worlds'; how should he endure this shepherd dance of metaphysics without hurrying to his old, old cosmic home?"

At that time he recognized a calm, Apollonian element in Wagner's art, which acted as a counterpoise to a passionate, yearning music. Later when Nietzsche had shaken off the influence of Schopenhauer and had begun to detect musical formlessness

in the new dramatic music, he felt in the score of *Tristan und Isolde* only oppressive, exhausting, and crudely elemental passion. Here Nietzsche goes beyond purely æsthetic criticism, for he sees in this passionateness and this return to the elemental a symptom and a sign of danger.

Wagner a Danger! in this heading of Nietzsche's lies the real animus of his attack. His philosophy looks over the shoulder of his art criticism and takes aim. Pied Piper, Klingsor of Klingsors, Orpheus of all secret misery, he calls Wagner. His ideal of health is that of a spiritual convalescent—he admits as much in the *Ecce Homo*—and one might expect a morbid fear of disease and distrust of weakness. Bias of the strongest sort is the inevitable result, but one accepts it gladly in exchange for a problem of great interest. This philosopher who looks over the art critic's shoulder—is he perhaps at soul an artist, a Maker, with a challenge? The problem is not a simple one. Nietzsche speaks deprecatingly of the *Artisten Metaphysik* of *The Birth of Tragedy*. But throughout his philosophy from the ethical ideals of a Superman and a cultural health on to detailed interpretation and construction there is a perfect tangle of intellectual and artistic motifs. The system-builder is an architect, with an architect's instincts; and these may show themselves either in the clamping together of parts or, as in Nietzsche's case, in singlemindedness and distrust together with much

structural looseness. Even apart from that, there is not a single interpretation of a doctrine or an historical event in Nietzsche uncolored by an imagination of peculiar quality; back of such a simple demand as that of sharpness and cleanliness of thinking is his interpretation of the Apollonian artist. Insight into the contrast of Apollonian and Dionysian art and into Nietzsche's artistic imagination may clear the problem; at present we must content ourselves with saying that it is the artist philosopher who looks over the shoulder of the art critic. A *Weltanschauung* condemns Wagner; a way of taking and testing the world quite as dogmatic and zealous as Tolstoy's, but much nearer the æsthetic in its ideals and motifs. *Wagner a Danger!* Why? Because he is the very spirit of modernism: a weak, restless spirit with a craving for stimulants. Nietzsche, the lonely seeker and champion of the Superman, turns away from his age with a surfeit of disgust. It is poverty stricken and soul sick; it lacks quality and strength. With its newspapers, labor unions, schools, and equality propaganda it is an age for the little man. Democracy breeds him, and society cares for and pampers him. But it is not merely plebeian; it is exhausted, and in its utter exhaustion it is lethargic and hysterical by turn. True to his theory that the biological up and down of an age, its health or diseased condition, is reflected in its art, Nietzsche comes to see in Wagner a point of view and an art which will

aggravate the disease. He looks back on his earlier praise, cries *Peccavi* and utters warning after warning. Where he once saw exuberance, he now sees weakness; where he saw genius and originality, he now sees the antics and the tricks of a *poseur*; where he saw passion, he sees fatigue whipped up by drugs. He distinguishes a pessimism of the weak and a pessimism of the strong.

“Is there a pessimism of strength? an intellectual preference for what is hard, fearful, bad, problematical in life; a preference that springs from well-being, overflowing health, fulness of life? Is there perhaps suffering because of that very fulness?”

Quite different, this “testing courage,” from the pessimism of the weak! The weak distrust their passions, they become ascetics; they are afraid of the truth, and so become romantic; they don’t like a fight and the gritty taste of real life, these dispirited ones, *presto!* another world appears, and theirs the task to be otherworldly. Nietzsche sees such protective cowardice everywhere; there is something almost perverse in the way in which he misjudges democracy and misreads Christianity. But whatever its source and justification, this general antipathy colors his judgment of Wagner. He pokes fun—and bitter fun it is at times—at the idea of salvation in Wagner. Every one in Wagner wishes to be saved; and every one is saved, preferably by a woman.

The otherworldliness of Parsifal? Anathema! He had once been a great admirer of Siegfried; he had seen in him and in the *Edda* characters strength and pressure of life, a reminiscence of an age when gods and men alike were granite boulders flung about by a cosmic upheaval; but now he speaks of them as shams, and of Siegfried as *fin de siècle*, as an inflated, sophisticated modern. The truth is, he distrusts Wagner. He has no stomach for that nauseating draught: "sweetish pity," insincere otherworldliness, and a sensual, flirtatious asceticism. Nietzsche has put this distrust in verse. The original German may stand: no translation is possible.

—Ist Das noch deutsch?—

Aus deutschem Herzen kam dies schwüle Kreischen?
Und deutschen Leibs ist dies Sich-selbst-Entfleischen?

Deutsch ist dies Priester-Händespreizen,

Dies weihrauch-düftelne Sinne-Reizen?

Und deutsch dies Stocken, Stürzen, Taumeln,

Dies ungewisse Bimbambaumeln?

Dies Nonnen-Aeugeln, Ave-Glocken-Bimmeln,

Dies ganze falsch verzückte Himmel-Ueberhimmeln?

—Ist das noch deutsch?—

Erwägt! Noch steht ihr an der Pforte:—

Denn was ihr hört, ist Rom,—Rom's Glaube ohne Worte!"

Nietzsche's *Weltanschauung* has played him a trick: the much admired Colossus of Tribschen shrivels to the theatrical mannikin of Bayreuth, the *Kirchenrat*, and then this mannikin, growing to the monstrous, becomes a bugbear, a deadly danger. There is much

of the human, all too human in Wagner; at times his sensuality is not sufficiently robust and his asceticism neither subtle nor convincing; his essays are vague, stodgy, and high-flown—an unpleasant mixture—and the note of sex is struck too often. But Nietzsche distorts like all idealists. His palette contains the most resplendent whites and the deepest blacks; and while he had once painted Wagner's portrait in white, he now does it in solid black.

✓ Two gods of Nietzsche's youth—Wagner and Schopenhauer—had been toppled over; his third great enthusiasm—Greek culture and Greek literature—remained secure. Like all good Germans he knew his Homer and Sophocles and had a well supplied philosopher's kit when he left school; but he was original and enterprising as well, read his philosophers in his own way, and upset the philologists with a brilliant, imaginative theory of Greek tragedy. { He was twenty-eight when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, in which he interpreted Greek tragedy as the meeting-point of two great cultural forces, the *Apollonian* and *Dionysian*, at work in Greek religion, philosophy, and art. Later on he had much fault to find with the essay, on the score of style, and because he felt that he had mixed what he called the Greek problem with the Wagner problem. His interest in Greek culture, however, lost none of its strength; it simply became more dis-

criminating and also more onesided when he discovered certain dangerous, disintegrating tendencies in the rise of Socratic philosophy and of science. Socrates, in whom he saw a disease and a danger, becomes his *bête noir*. When could Nietzsche do without a *bête noir*? in fact he sometimes felt that he himself was one. There remained also the contrast Nietzsche had so sharply indicated, but the terms Apollonian and Dionysian were used with an ever wider fling of meaning. They now appeared as contrasted universal types or moods rather than as shapers of Greek culture. Not that this was anything but a stressing and developing of much *The Birth of Tragedy* contained.

The *Apollonian* is a mood of calmness, of measure, of tranquil pursuit of sheer beauty; the *Dionysian* is a mood of ecstatic, drunken, reeling frenzy, of life at full pressure. The tutelary divinity of the first is Apollo, the limpid, harmonious Olympian; that of the second is Dionysus, the stranger god from Asia, the reveller and leader of wild-eyed votaries. Everywhere may these types be found; they are two master forces of cosmic life: fermentation and clarification. Theirs is an important part in the household economy of nature. Nietzsche points to Dionysian elements in all Oriental religions, to frenzied songs and dances, to the self-absorption and exaltation of the mystic, to the dancing manias of the Middle Ages, and to the mixture of lust and cruelty, "that witches' draught,"

which is such a noxious ingredient in many primitive religions.

Nietzsche is at his best when he describes one or the other of these types. Back of the contrast is of course Schiller's theory of *Stofftrieb* and *Formtrieb*. With Schiller it was a bit of Kantian philosophy thinly disguised and with much of the tang of rationalism remaining. But the artist in Nietzsche changes all this; he makes us feel the wild pulse-beat of the Dionysian and the calm splendor of the Apollonian in his wonderfully flexible prose; he describes both so well because he is both; he is "*Rauschkünstler*" and "*Traumkünstler*" in one.

⤵ The *Dionysian* mood is not a simple one; and Nietzsche gives finely its varying characteristics. First, the self-surrender of the individual and a feeling of oneness with nature. There are moments when we are not a steadily glowing light swung aloft above the altar of our god, but a raging fire with a desire for divine absorption consuming our souls. Second, vigor, exuberance, frenzy. Æschylus and Rodin are in this sense Dionysian artists. Third, revelling in conflict as such, in contradiction as such: in the sharpness of life's blows and the pungent bitterness of its flavor.* Fourth, a certain

* This is Nietzsche's "heroic pessimism." In *The Twilight of the Idols* he interprets tragedy in this spirit. "What does the tragic artist give us of himself? Is it not his fearlessness when confronted with what is fearful and enigmatic? This state of fearless-

sadness touched with weariness. This may seem a false note in Nietzsche's picture, but there is nothing more natural than passing from intense excitement to a spent state of exhaustion, and to a mood of wearied sadness.

The *Apollonian* mood is partly an urgent demand to create, to render beauty; partly a desire to keep sane, to escape from inner and outer unreason to a dream world; it is a mood of self-possession, of cheerfulness and thankfulness.

These moods express themselves in art: the Apollonian in sculpture and epic poetry—theirs are sharp outlines, an unruffled stateliness, and a tranquil beauty; the Dionysian in the throbbing life of music, in the abandon of the dance, and in the passionate lyric. Art reflects culture; in Greek culture they stand out sharply. Many before Nietzsche had recognized the Apollonian element in Greek art; men like Winckelmann and Goethe never tired of pointing to the ideal and reposeful beauty of Greek sculpture, and to the sure touch and unerring sense

ness is highly desirable; he who knows it bestows upon it the greatest honors. He communicates it to others; this he must do if he is an artist, a genius at giving. Courage and freedom of feeling in the presence of a mighty enemy, of a sublime disaster, of a problem fraught with terror—this victorious attitude is what the tragic artist selects and glorifies. What is warlike in our souls celebrates in tragedy its Saturnalia. He who knows sorrow and seeks sorrow—the heroic man—praises in tragedy his own existence; it is to him that the tragic poet offers the honor of this sweetest of all cruel draughts."

of form revealed in even the lesser arts. Nietzsche admits this delight in ordered beauty, in clear colors, sharp contours, and linear grace; he admits "the incredibly precise and unerring plastic power" of the Greek eye; he accepts in part the traditional view that evenness, sunniness, and saneness marked the racial temper of the Greeks. But what was commonly held to be an endowment he interpreted as an achievement. How the Greek must have suffered and struggled before he could change chaos into cosmos, and wrest measure and poise from the unchecked and the violent! How he must have cut into his passions and hacked at his world! Rightly or wrongly Nietzsche reads the problem of Greek art and culture in terms of a struggle between Dionysian and Apollonian forces. He distinguishes four periods. In the first, the pre-Homeric period, the Dionysian spirit is rampant; and it finds an outlet in barbarous theogonies, in a titanic, grotesque folk-philosophy. The second, the Homeric period, is Apollonian. Homer's mellow art casts a glamour on even the commonest things, and the world appears bathed in simple, translucent beauty.* Then there

* In *Homer's Wettkampf*, written in 1872 as the preface to a projected book, Nietzsche characterizes these first two periods strongly:

"But what lies as the beginning of all that is Greek back of the Homeric world? In the latter the extraordinary sureness, restfulness, and purity of line carry us beyond a mere fusing of matter; because of an æsthetic illusion its colors seem brighter, warmer, and

is in the third period an inrush of the Dionysian from the North; barbarous, ecstatic cults come from Thrace; in the South the turbulent lyric makes itself heard; notes of pessimism and weariness are struck by the philosophers of the seventh and sixth centuries. But Apollo again triumphs: in the severe grace of Doric architecture and sculpture and in the beauty and polish of Attic prose. His triumph marks the fourth period. This bold sketch of Greek culture fails to take account of racial differences among the Greeks, of the effects of political and industrial conditions, and of the purely personal factor in poetry, say in the lyrics of Archilochus. Still modern scholarship has borne out Nietzsche's view of a

lighter, its people appear better and more akin to us in this multi-colored, warm light. But what do we behold when, no longer guided and shielded by the hand of Homer, we stalk back into the pre-Homeric world? Darkness and terror and the products of an imagination used to the horrible! What an existence is mirrored in these repellent, fearful theogonies and myths: a life ruled by the Children of Night, strife, lust, fraud, old age and death! Imagine the stifling air of Hesiod's poems thickened and darkened still more, without the softening and purifying influences emanating from Delphi and numerous Greek temples; mix this heavy Boeotian air with the gloomy lustfulness of the Etruscan—and you could press from a reality such as this a world of myths compared with which Uranus, Kronus and Zeus and the battles of the Titans would seem a relief. In this brooding atmosphere battle is the way to safety, and the cruelty of victory is the acme of the joy of life. Greek law and morality go back in their origins to blood-guilt and retribution; a nobler stage of culture takes its first wreath of victory from the altar dedicated to the cleansing of blood-guilt."

primitive, formless Dionysian element in early Greek religion.

Greek tragedy is at once Dionysian and Apollonian. It sprang from the dithyramb, from legends, from the life of the god Dionysus and a chorus of satyrs, the woodland companions of the god. On the wave of this Dionysian excitement, of chant, music, and dance the cultured Greek was carried and set down in the midst of primordial nature. Generations of restraint fell away from him, and he again felt the earthy savour of life at its freest and wildest. The Greek theatre, of circular and terraced construction, allowed this excitement to sweep from chorus to spectator. The chorus takes no prominent part in the action, not because, as Schiller had suggested, it serves to mark off the world of tragedy as an ideal world, but because it is the voice of a world older than the clash of individual wills. It stands by with deep-echoing wisdom on its tongue, as the fellow sufferer, as the servant of its god. It excites, exalts, and sobers; and prepares the way for the Apollonian vision. Man slakes his thirst at the well of life. He feels the fire of good old wine in his veins. But he also feels the constraint to shape a dream-world; without it and its illusions life would become oppressive beyond endurance. On this underground of world-will there is the dazzling picture spray of the Apollonian. The dialogue and the characters represent the Apollonian element in Greek tragedy.

Nothing could be simpler, more harmonious, more transparent than the language and the characters of Sophocles. We seem to know them through and through, these Sophoclean men and women. But they are really nothing but luminous pictures flung across a dark screen. Their clear lineaments form a restful and healing contrast to the gloomy, ill ordered, terrifying myth; they offer an escape from the panic or the nausea of existence.

One feels the influence of Schiller, Schopenhauer, and Wagner in Nietzsche's early æsthetics; but his theory of Greek tragedy is quite original in its imaginative force. Starlight in a black mountain lake—a fine conception of tragedy! His interpretation of the *Œdipus* story or the *Prometheus* myth may be un-Greek, it at least shows artistic insight into possibilities; he is as truly a Maker as Goethe was when he took the old *Faust* legend and its naïve delight in magic and polemics, and made of it the drama of the restless seeker of an abiding self.

The terms Apollonian and Dionysian appear in Nietzsche long after this special problem of tragedy disappears. They are interpreted psychologically, and may serve to usher in Nietzsche's picture of the artist—a picture which in turn may be made to reveal Nietzsche the artist-philosopher. His biological studies have borne fruit; for him there is no absolute beauty; there is only a "human, all too human"

< beauty. Nature is at heart neither beautiful nor ugly, just as she is neither good nor bad. Man may stamp her with his own weakness and littleness or he may dower her with his own wealth and strength; in either case art is self-expression. It matters greatly what sort of a self is expressed. Nietzsche is not altogether consistent; he often sees strength and weakness in Nature herself, he contrasts periods of health and decay, and in this way seems to get an objective foundation for morality and art. But he is far removed from the dogmatism of certain evolutionists; he lacks the easy assurance with which Spencer strolls up the world stairs. Life to him may be a Penelope web of ups and downs or it may be a music box with a round of tunes; it is the attitude towards life that counts. There is a *yea-saying* and a *nay-saying* to life, in art as well as in morality; there is an art of the strong and an art of the weak. Great art is strong art and stands for heightened vigor, impelling wealth and a wholehearted response to life. It may be of the Dionysian type or of the Apollonian, that of a Rubens and a Shakespeare or that of a Homer and a Goethe. The two types are reinterpreted. They touch each other at certain points: both are moods of intoxication; in both there is a strange power of divination. What a drunkenness of the eye and the ear there is in the Apollonian; how he revels in color and sound and form! But there is also a delicate sense of measure which orders

his impressions, gives him a sense of hidden beauty, and a cool and playful mastery over a dream world. Maeterlinck might well be this Nietzschean artist, he lacks not a single one of these traits. The Dionysian intoxication is a diffused excitement bursting forth into passion, into explosive feeling. The Dionysian artist is forceful, rich, passionate, masterful; he does not respond readily to form, but his imagination, at once intense and of great range, allows him to divine the emotional. And once divined, he cannot resist; with a reckless, lunging self-assertion he throws himself at life. His is a mood of joyful and courageous abandon; he gives of himself without stint. His is the ecstatic dance of the warrior; and not that thing of divine lightness, of calm strength and tremulous beauty: the dance of the Apollonian.

This whole contrast, together with the many fine remarks on the psychology of the artist which are grouped about it, strikes a very personal note. One feels that Nietzsche has drawn on himself, has generalized from his processes and methods as an artist. He himself dispels the slightest doubt on that point, for he is fully aware of his artistic endowment and often refers to his Apollonian and Dionysian nature. To say that Nietzsche attributed to himself both types because he felt that he, a great man in his own eyes, must have the tensional and varied nature of great men, is an unkind and false suggestion. It may at once be admitted that as a self-critic he had

grave faults. He lacked a true estimate of his place and rank. Much in *Ecce Homo* is wild; some of it reads like the confessions of a megalomaniac. He has given the world the greatest of its books, a well of gold and kindness; he is the great transvaluer who has split human history in two; time is to be reckoned from him; the combined geniuses of the ages could not have produced a single one of the speeches of Zarathustra: that is his tone. But a man may form the silliest over-estimate or under-estimate of himself and his work, and yet may show an understanding of the trend of his thought and true insight into his peculiarities as an Artist and a Thinker. Here Nietzsche's touch is sure. The contrast between the Apollonian and Dionysian may not be as sharp as one would like, it may occasionally exhibit wavering and a shifting of qualities, but there is not a single quality mentioned which does not in some manner mark the artist and reveal Nietzsche's almost uncanny self-knowledge. Every one of these qualities may be traced in the artistic motifs of his philosophy as well as in the rhythm and imagery of his language.

On the whole Nietzsche stresses the Dionysian. He appeals to Dionysus; he credits himself with having revived the dithyramb; he considers *Thus Spake Zarathustra* a Dionysian stroke of genius. To him that book is a masterpiece, and he has much to say of its excellences. He refers to its passionateness. The speeches of Zarathustra throb and glow with an

intense love of life and with a passionate devotion to an ideal. Parts of the book were written rapidly, under full pressure, on long walks up the mountains; in all of it Nietzsche feels the returning tide of health and power. He refers to the music of its language, the dancing rhythms, the varying tempo. And he refers to the range: here are to be found the softest, the sweetest, the lightest, and also the most awe-inspiring and soul-compelling strains. His criticisms are not far wrong, he has indeed hit upon the qualities that make *Thus Spake Zarathustra* his finest achievement as an artist. But it is more than a mass of Dionysian poems; it gives, as no other work of his does, the essence of his philosophy. That essence does not lie in the intellectual padding which is to be found elsewhere in Nietzsche. While the editors are largely responsible for the arrangement of the manuscript material of *The Will to Power*, many of the pedantic divisions and headings are Nietzsche's; so are also the school-man's discussions of points. The same may be said of many passages in his letters and in such books as *The Genealogy of Morals* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. The pedantry even filters through to the language. Learning has its affectations and awkwardnesses, and at his worst this master of style exhibits them abundantly. Nor is this essence to be found in the unclear enthusiasms of the youthful *Birth of Tragedy*. Whatever else may be said of Nietzsche as a philosopher, the charge of unclearness cannot be lodged

against him in his later work. He is too much of an Apollonian for that; his weakness lies in the transitions, and not in the ideas or conceptions, which have something of the sharpness of a fine etching. It is in the expression of mood, in certain emotional reactions, that the meaning of his philosophy lies; and the best clue to that meaning is given in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Take, for example, the doctrine of eternal recurrence; what does it mean to Nietzsche? He might have raised the question of a finite or an infinite universe, and might have tried to work the number of possible combinations mathematically; he might have been interested in it from the point of view of system-building. But of the second interest there is even less than of the first. It may be ingenious sport to show how a philosophy is all of a piece, and to make all its theories fit, but it is dangerous sport with Nietzsche's. One can, of course, show how the doctrine of eternal recurrence connects with his interpretation of what is commonly called evolution and how it fits in with his doctrine of the Superman, but little or nothing is gained, for these other theories are differently shaped and colored at different times. Whatever congruity there is in his philosophy is largely emotional. The doctrine of eternal recurrence interests Nietzsche only as the possible carrier of certain moods.

"Everything goes, everything returns; forever rolls

the wheel of being. Everything dies, everything blooms again; forever passes the year of being.

"Everything breaks, everything is made anew; forever the same house of being is built. All things part and all things meet; eternally true to itself remains the circle of being."

But what of the "little man"; is he to return, too? What of sickness and weakness; is there no way of ridding the universe of them? Thoughts such as these sweep over Zarathustra like a wave of disgust and despair. But why then entertain them, it might be asked? It is because they develop at the rebound another mood, that of the fighter. It is a mood that appeals to Nietzsche, and most of his fighting was done within the shadow of physical depression and of disgust with his fellows. The *Ecce Homo* proves that; so do his letters. The thought of an eternal recurrence favors fighting at its purest, for the mere love of it, with no hope of a final victory. The Superman knows that for every up there is a down; he understands that events will swing full cycle and that the weaklings whom he has trodden under foot, the "many, all too many," will defeat him in turn. But he fights on; the mood of depression yields to a fighting mood, which is in part the mere joy of playing the game of life, in part a sort of heroic enthusiasm, in part the stimulating sense of creative power. It is a mistake, however, to say that Nietzsche's fighter has no thought of results, no eye to victory.

While he sees no hope of final success, he feels the incentive of an enthusiasm, of an ideal. This beyond all else marks Zarathustra: he is a pleader and spokesman of the future; a pioneer and a builder. He feels his task and has faith in his work. If fighting is looked at from this angle exclusively, the fact of eternal recurrence will be merely a complicating incident. But in Nietzsche the mood is often a different one. The clue is given by two passages, one from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, the other from Book IV of *The Will to Power*.

The passage in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is called *The Seven Seals*. It is a wonderful pæan with a triumphant refrain: *For I love thee, O Eternity*. It is too long to give in full, but these two selections show the mood.

"If ever there came to me a breath of a creator's breath, and of that divine necessity which compels accidents even to dance the circular dance of the stars;

"If ever I laughed with the laugh of the creative lightning, as it is followed obediently but sullenly by the thunder of action;

"If ever I played dice with the gods at their table, the earth, and played so that the earth shook and broke and breathed floods of fire;

"—for the earth is a table of the gods, and it trembles with creators' words and the dice-throws of the gods—

"Oh, how should I not long for Eternity and for

the bridal ring of rings, the ring of Eternal Recurrence? ”

The other selection:

“ If ever I drank a deep draught from the foaming spice- and mixing-bowl, in which all things are well mixed;

“ If ever my hand poured together the most distant and the near, fire and spirit, joy and sorrow, the worst and the kindest;

“ If I am a grain of that saving salt which causes all things to be well mixed in the mixing-bowl

“ —for there is a salt which binds the good and the bad; and even the worst has its value in the seasoning and the last foaming—

“ Oh, how should I not long for Eternity and for the bridal ring of rings, the ring of Eternal Recurrence? ”

The note of creative self-expression is struck again and again. Give me a self to express and a world to mould, Nietzsche would say. There is nothing depressing in the thought of eternal recurrence. Could you stop the brush of the painter by reminding him that thousands of years hence his canvases will be mere dust? That final result will not affect him; he paints his picture—there is enough of an ideal right there—and feels the zest of self-expression. This is what Nietzsche feels. He asks for a plastic world, a world of merging contrasts, of bitter strife, of mingled good and evil. It is not to be plastic in any

final sense; there is lacking here James's craving for newness and ever changing experimentation. The plasticity—or rather the illusion of plasticity—is within one of the cycles or Great Years of a circling eternity, but that is all that is needed—a bit of clay or palette of colors and an ideal. The same invigorating thought is found in *The Will to Power*. The artist's sense of power and intense delight in self-expression have been transferred to the world-game. Nothing could be sharper than the contrast between the *active, dramatic* enthusiasm of Nietzsche and the *contemplative* enthusiasm of a Marcus Aurelius. The Stoic sings: "Whatsoever is expedient unto thee, O Universe, is expedient unto me"; but there is in him no trace of a *sucherische, versucherische Tätigkeit*, nothing of testing and experimenting self-expression; there is also no trace of that intense self-reference which is so important a mark of Nietzsche's artistic and philosophical personality. Marcus Aurelius and Hegel, each in his own way, had a profound faith in the reasonableness of the universe, and placed highest among the duties loyalty to the truth and reason of things. Nietzsche plays brilliantly on the Hegelian *An und für sich Sein der Dinge* when he substitutes for it the phrase *An und für mich Sein der Dinge*. It is I that count; give me a world I can work myself out in. Whatever drama there is is self-drama. There lies the difference in the dramatic as it appears in Hegel and the dramatic as it appears in Nietzsche.

In Hegel it is objective, a sympathetic understanding of a progressive world-movement and all its complications; with Nietzsche it is subjective; that is why he is not a good interpreter of history, whether that history be political, social or cultural. He misreads Socratic philosophy, gives fanciful and often very naïve interpretations of the early phases of Christianity and of the origin of morality, and shows no grasp of the advancing democracy and the economic unrest of his time. It is true that Hegel is not always a good interpreter of history; but when he errs it is because he links events artificially in the interests of his idea of a cosmic reason. The fault with Nietzsche is his utter subjectivity. A personal reaction becomes a philosophical clue, and that clue is worked and amplified until it becomes a whole cluster of suggestions.

To draw up a list of such personal clues and to trace their work in the upbuilding of his philosophy would be a difficult matter. But some at least may be hinted at: the convalescent's dread of disease; an abnormal sense of physical cleanliness, to which Nietzsche himself attributes his distaste for extreme democracy; self-esteem; a craving for the picturesque, the orderly and the rhythmic; and an intense interest, not in the world outside, but in his own impressions and his responses to that world. In the *Antichrist*, in the pamphlets against Wagner, and in many of his earlier books there

are passages in which this personal, subjective, impressionistic nature of his philosophy is quite apparent. An emotional note will be struck—disgust or distrust or enthusiasm or playfulness—and then with a rush a whole emotional tone-structure will make its appearance, and, threading its way in and out, will be the original note; everywhere there is a strong sense of self-expression, of intimacy, of possession. In some such way might a man walk in and out of his house or pass from room to room. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is subjectively dramatic. There are, of course, all sorts of theories and doctrines, of these the doctrine of eternal recurrence is only one. Marriage is discussed, so is war; we are told of the Superman; we are given a new set of moral laws; there is a great deal of social criticism; but every one of these theories is presented in terms of the most personal kind. That might be called a poetic artifice if the emphasis were not everywhere on Zarathustra as a responding and creating personality—that is, on self-drama. We follow Zarathustra on his travels, become party to his ideals, commune with him and struggle with his doubts; we dance with him and swoon with him; we climb with him and fall with him. His speeches impress us not as mirrors flashing back the truth of things, but as so much “landscape of soul.” The landscape of the book itself, the sea, the mountains, the forest, a rich meadow, an oversea Isle of the Blest, trees against lowering

clouds, a deep blue expanse of sky, is impressionistic in its patchiness and in its symbolism of varying moods.

One of Nietzsche's finest bits of self-analysis is a passage in *Ecce Homo* in which he refers to the involuntary character of the imagery in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and to his sense of rhythm. These clues when followed up will yield two further traits in the portrait of the artist-philosopher. The passage reads:

“Has any one at the end of the nineteenth century an understanding of what poets of virile ages called *inspiration*? If not, I shall describe it. With the least bit of superstition remaining, one could not but feel oneself mere idea, mere incarnation, mere mouthpiece, mere medium of supernatural powers. The word *revelation* marks the facts. All of a sudden with wonderful sureness and fineness something becomes visible, audible, something which shakes us to the depths and topples us over. One hears, and yet one does not seek; one takes and yet one does not ask who it is that gives; a thought flashes like lightning: inevitably, unhesitatingly—never did I have any choice. An ecstasy of fearful tension—slackened occasionally by a stream of tears—with a step now stormy, now slow; an utter losing oneself, and the clear consciousness of innumerable electric currents and tremblings to one's very toes; a depth of happiness in which what is most painful and most gloomy is not asked for as a contrast, but demanded with a challenge as a necessary color within such an abundance of light; a wide-spanning feeling of rhythm

and form! It sometimes occurs to me that the demand for a sense of rhythm of wide span practically measures the strength of inspiration and at the same time counteracts its pressure. All these things come to pass involuntarily, emphatically so, but they come with a hurricane of a feeling of freedom, independence, power, divinity. Most strange of all is the involuntary character of the imagery, of the simile; one no longer knows the meaning of image or simile: everything offers itself as the nearest, the truest, the simplest expression: it seems as though—to speak with Zarathustra—all things came and offered themselves as similes.”

Much of the imagery in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is indeed involuntary, and it would not be hard to give instance after instance. In some of the more rhapsodic passages there seems to be at first glance only a confusion of metaphors among which Nietzsche's thought goes ricocheting at all sorts of angles. But one glance more will show a curious orderliness and a curious involuntariness in all this imagery. An image suggests itself, something in that image gives a stealthy clue to some other image; above the surface there seems to be a rough break, but below there is the continuity of mood. In the section *Of the Sublime* Zarathustra compares his mind to the depth of the sea. Out of this general image there breaks for Nietzsche the image of the silence of the deep. But he is hurried on. What! so silent, and swarming with sea monsters. Monsters—prey—booty—hunter:

the scene has shifted, Zarathustra sees a hunter coming out of the forest; slung over his shoulder is his booty, a bagful of ugly truths. Hunter—forest—wild animals: what if this hunter has not killed the wild animal in himself? This may serve as an example of such an involuntary development of imagery. It cannot be called a literary device, for while it is most noticeable in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* it is present in Nietzsche's other books. And what of the evidence furnished by those emotional clusters of thought which were interpreted as forms of the subjectively dramatic?

Not always, however, is it the wire of a single mood or a complex of moods that controls the leaps and antics of Nietzsche's imagery; sometimes there is an almost purely verbal continuity. The pun is, of course, one of the simplest forms of such continuity, and Nietzsche, like many great men, can on occasion be an atrocious punster. But apart from that, all kinds of verbal analogies and contrasts play a conscious and often an unconscious part in the development of his thought; and it is the verbal form that controls the mood and makes *it* play to its lead. Here is an example:

“Euer Eheschliessen: seht zu, dass es nicht ein schlechtes Schliessen sei! Ihr schlosset zu schnell: so folgt daraus—Ehebrechen!

Und besser noch Ehebrechen als Ehe-biegen,

Ehe-lügen! So sprach mir ein Weib, 'wohl brach ich die Ehe, aber zuerst brach die Ehe—mich!' ”

Another example:

“ Warum so weich, so weichend und nachgebend? ”

Another:

“ Schätzen ist Schaffen: hört es, ihr Schaffenden! Schätzen selber ist aller geschätzten Dinge Schatz und Kleinod.”

Still another:

“ —Wie? Ward die Welt nicht eben vollkommen? Rund und reif? Oh des goldenen runden Reifs—wohin fliegt er wohl? ”

Nietzsche's sense of rhythm gives quite as good a clue to the artistic in his philosophy as such involuntary imagery yields. German is not a very rhythmical or flexible language; it is a *squatting* language; it sits down heavily and crushes out all movement, all lively and subtle play of mood. But Nietzsche is not a *squatting* philosopher. His thought is all movement, on the surface and below the surface, and of the utmost variety. It is quite as characteristic of him as it is of Rodin. Rodin, with a testing and tempting courage which Nietzsche would have praised, seeks to express in his varied and restless figures something of the stress and strife which are at the heart of things; Nietzsche's thought plays in and out and all about certain ideas, such as

will to power, eternal recurrence, life as a fighter's game and gamble, which are in and of themselves dramatic. His is a jumping and throbbing and dancing philosophy; it leads him and his reader many a merry dance. It offers little in the way of neat solutions, less in the way of consistent, final results; but it does give a wealth of rhythms, imaginative and intellectual, expressed in language of great force and span. Nietzsche's name has played a prominent part in recent war talk, but it is a mistake, and a serious one, to think of him as interested in war from the point of view of political self-preservation or of some great idea of national expansion. Nietzsche's experiences in the Franco-Prussian war were barren of results, judging from his books and letters, and he seems to have been untouched by the new and momentous ideal of a united Germany. His true interest lay not in war, but in the psychology of fighting, in the rhythm of blows given and taken.

It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to separate form and substance or to distinguish between Nietzsche's conscious use of rhythm and the subconscious, vibratory character of his philosophy. But it would be worth the attempt. Here and there it can be done easily.

Nietzsche has much to say of the resentful nature of the little man; *ressentiment* is one of his favorite words; he interprets asceticism and certain moral

and religious beliefs as the belittling, resentful malice of the weak. There are passages in that rather sober and somewhat pedantic book, *The Genealogy of Morals*, and in *The Antichrist*, in which this philosophy of resentment takes on the color and rhythm of resentment. There is a curious emotional restlessness, a staccato succession of adjectives of abuse, an ill-bred and very ingenious way of twisting things, a bit of a sneer and an occasional shrug, together with a very large fear lest his thrusts fail to strike home—facts, all of them, of great interest to the psychologist of resentment. There is all the difference in the world between such badgering, pounding and grinding rhythms and the emotionally sustained, ample, generous, undulatory rhythms of such passages in *The Gay Science*, *The Dawn of Day*, and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* as preach the *Superman* and the love of to-morrow.

Nietzsche's sense of rhythm also plays a part, even if a minor one, in his theory of eternal recurrence. He is fond of refrain and of a sort of circle pattern rhythm. In the last paragraph of *The Will to Power* he gives his theory in language which allows one to feel the stress of will, and which by a balanced alternation of clauses and phrases suggests the very rhythm of recurrence. The parallelism between theory and subconscious motifs is here perfect. The same rhythmic equivalent is given in such swaying, recurrent movement and imagery as this:

"In dein Auge schaute ich jüngst, oh Leben: Gold sah ich in deinem Nacht-Auge blinken,—mein Herz stand still vor dieser Wollust:

"—einen goldenen Kahn sah ich blinken auf nächtigen Gewässern, einen sinkenden, trinkenden, wieder winkenden goldenen Schaukel-Kahn!

"Nach meinem Fusse, dem tanzwüthigen, warfst du einen Blick, einen lachenden fragenden schmelzenden Schaukel-Blick:"

One further illustration! In a passage in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* called *Noontide* we are given the rhythm of sleep, not of a deep, even-pulsing, dreamless sleep, but of a light sleep with changing dream pictures and dream rhythms, with uneasy stirrings and drowsy feelings of sinking—sinking into "*the well of Eternity*."

"Like a graceful breeze, invisible, dancing on the smooth floor of the sea, Sleep dances on me—lightly. lightly as a feather.

"Not an eyelid of mine does he close; he allows my soul to remain awake. Of a truth he is light, light as a feather.

"He persuades me, I know not how; he touches me faintly with flattering hand; he forces me; he forces my soul to relax.

"The slightest, the stillest, the lightest—the rustling of a lizard, a breath, a lightning-like movement, a moment—a slight thing like these is the best happiness. Hush!

"What is happening to me? Hark! Has Time

taken wing? Am I not falling—hark! falling into the well of Eternity? ”

Here is the artist Nietzsche at his best, catching as it were the life of silence in its free and varied swing. And what of the philosopher Nietzsche? Is there not here a very large part of his secret? One might prefer the clear, white light of truth, but one cannot help being struck with the colorfulness of this *prismatic* philosophy. One cannot help seeing the artist in the philosopher, an artist of great power and of an original stamp. Part of his quality may be caught by calling him warm and subjectively dramatic, an unconscious exploiter of moods and dancer to many rhythms, a visualizer and vitalizer of contrasts of movement, of struggle. Such phrases may mean little or they may mean much: it all depends on how much backing they have in the way of an analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy. As they stand they certainly do not exhaust the artistic significance of that philosophy—it is too complex for that—but they do give something of its *tang*,



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